SPORTS/ A21
Cavaliers, Spurs, Jazz take 3-1 leads; Heat still alive

BUSINESS / B1
Inflation seen to range from 3.9% to 4.8%

BUSINESS / B4
Ayala Land takes control of El Nido

NEWS/ A2
NP Senate bet Remulla admits seeing Ampatuan Sr.

Barin: Calls by top gov't execs normal

By Raoel W. Dominguez and Norman Bordadora

NOTHING EXTRAORDINARY.

Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Chair Fe Barin yesterday said there was nothing unusual in her receiving a call from then Senate President Manny Villar as phone calls from various government officials were normal to her.

Also, Barin said Villar, the Nacionalista Party candidate for president in the May

BARIN, A4

Jamby spends birthday on poor 'island in city'

By Jerry E. Esplanada

"THE RICH ARE DIFFERENT from those you and me," said author F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Instead of throwing a big party, presidential candidate Maria Kris

JAMBY, A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, April 27, 2010 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 25 / No. 138 P18

Noy widens lead; veep race heats up

LP: Support for Aquino has solidified

IN DEFENSE OF HER SON Manay Caring, 86, breaks into tears during a press conference at her home in BF Homes, Las Piñas City on Monday, to defend her son, Nacionalista Party presidential candidate Manuel Villar, against critics who question his rags-to-riches story.

By Cyril L. Bonabesa
Inquirer Research
Gil Cabacungan
and Christine O. Avendaño

THE LEAD OF LIBERAL Party presidential candidate Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III over Manuel "Manny" Villar Jr. of the Nacionalista Party widened to double digits three weeks before the presidential election, a Social Weather Stations survey, as reported by Business World, showed.

Aquino's lead over Villar increased from 9 points last month to 12 points in the survey conducted from April 16 to 19, owing to the former's single-point gain to 38 percent, and the latter's two point-drop to 26 percent.

Assuming a voter turnout of 77 percent (the turnout in the 2004 presidential election), Aquino would have won by some 4.7 million votes over Villar had the presidential election been held in the third week of April.

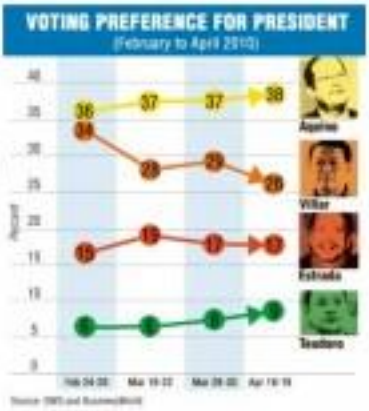
Aquino would have garnered 14.8 million votes of the 39 million votes cast (77 percent of the 50.7 million registered voters) and Villar 10.1 million.

Black propaganda launched against him by the camp of Villar, ranging from a bogus psychiatric report to a fake epileptic attack, has backfired on the the NP candidate, the LP standard-bearer said.

Aquino said the survey results showed that the cuts of his supporters had "solidified" behind him as they felt that their candidate had been attacked "below the belt."

That Villar's ratings have been

NOY WIDENS, A10



Roxas still on top; Binay edges Legarda

SEN. MANUEL "MAR" ROXAS II remained the top contender for the vice presidency, while Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay climbed up to second place in a statistical tie with Sen. Loren Legarda, results of the latest Social Weather Stations survey showed.

Of the 2,400 registered voters surveyed from April 16 to 19, 39 percent said they would have voted for Roxas for vice president if the elections were held at the time. This is a three-point drop from his March rating.

Support for Roxas has been declining since December 2009,

ROXAS, A10

but he maintains a considerable lead over his rivals.

"I am deeply grateful to our people who continue to trust and support my candidacy. Rest assured that we will push for good governance to heal the sufferings of our people and lead this nation into genuine change," Roxas said in a statement.

Binay gained four points to 25 percent, placing him in second place with Legarda, who lost a point to 24 percent, given the survey's margin of error of plus-or-minus two percentage points.

Manny Villar's ma faces media to defend 'poor son'

By Nikko Dizon

SO BITTER HAS THE RACE for the presidency become that even mothers—living and dead—are being dragged into the fray.

If the camp of Liberal Party standard-bearer Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III earlier invoked the memory of his late mother, democracy icon Corazon Aquino, it was the turn of his closest rival yesterday to draw strength from his own family.

A frail, wheelchair-bound Corita Villar faced the media yesterday to defend her eldest son, Nacionalista Party (NP) standard-bearer Sen. Manuel Villar, mainly against critics who question his rags-to-riches story.

In a press conference held at her BF Resort residence in Las Piñas, the 86-year-old matriarch—visually impaired since 2007—broke into emotional outbursts. At one point, one of Villar's sisters had to cut the briefing short after their mother began to weep and had difficulty breathing.

"What do you want to know about my son?" Manay Caring asked in Filipino, addressing reporters gathered in her modest living room awash in his son's campaign color, orange.

The mother of the lone bil-

MANNY, A6

Comelec to decide on parallel count soon

By Leila B. Salaverria and Kristine L. Alave

AN EXTRA THREE HOURS IS A small price to pay, but election officials aren't buying, yet.

Concerned groups yesterday again met with the Commission on Elections (Comelec) en banc to press proposals to conduct a parallel manual count in the contests for president, vice president and mayors in the May 10 automated balloting.

But the Comelec officials said they would have to consult with field officials to determine the feasibility of the proposal with just two weeks to go before the country's first nationwide electronic elections.

Emerging from an en banc meeting with representatives of the Makati Business Club (MBC), the Philippine Bar Association (PBA) and the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections, Commissioner Gregorio Larrazabal said the poll body would make its final ruling in several days.

"The parallel manual count is a complex activity that needs

COMELEC, A17

109 years of Ortegas in La Union; Gordons, Magsaysays in Zambales

By Inquirer Northern Luzon

(Second of four parts)

IN SO PROVINCES, AT LEAST 108 families use elections to the Philippines as a virtual playground to keep themselves in political power.

SPECIAL REPORT

What special qualities these privileged few have that enable husbands, wives, sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, granddaughters, grandsons, granddaughters, grandmothers, nieces, nephews and in-laws to remain in control isn't clear.

What is clear, though, is that they are addicted to power.

The provision against political dynasties is one of the most explicit in the 1987 Constitution, but it has also become the most neglected, if not totally ignored. Congress has become populated with the very people the Constitution has sought to keep out.

Election after election, voters witness a parade of families similar to what their parents had seen in their time, and what their children will likely see in the future.

The heyday looks into the issue, starting in Northern Luzon, to see why the Philippine countryside remains the playhouse of political clans.

The Ortegas are still the dominant and most durable political clan in La Union. 109 years after the family patriarch, Joaquín Ortega, was appointed by the Americans as the province's first Filipino

109 YEARS, A17

Country's 'most hated man' digs in

By Dono Z. Pazzibugan

THE MAN WHO RAISED A TEMpest when he cleared two members of the Ampatuan clan of 57 counts of murder in the Maguindanao massacre says he can't believe he has become the country's most hated man.

Acting Justice Secretary Alberto Agra yesterday failed to break an impasse between him and his own prosecutors as he defiantly defended his controversial decision absolving suspended Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and Maguindanao Vice Gov. Ahmad Ampatuan Jr.

At a flag ceremony at the

COUNTRY'S, A4

ACTING Justice Secretary Alberto Agra tells media he has no plans of resigning and creating a new panel to review his highly controversial decision to drop charges against two members of the Ampatuan clan.

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Aparri	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Puerto Princesa	Partly Cloudy	Mos. Cloudy
Virac	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Tacloban	Partly Cloudy	Rains

Cebu	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Iloilo	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy with Rains
Davao	Partly Cloudy	Rains

Lowland rains under thunderstorms in the afternoon

6/49 19 2 31 8 5 26

SUERTRES 0 1 4 4 8 6 5 0 4

FOUR DIGIT 5 0 4 9

MEGALOTTO 6/45 4 11 15 28 36 39 P34,282,641.60

6/55 GRAND LOTTO 11 12 13 26 30 41 P115,773,868.80

NP bet admits meeting with Andal Sr.

By Nikko Dizon

TENSIONS ROSE IN A PRESS CONFERENCE OF Nacionalista Party senatorial candidates after one of them admitted having met with former Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan Sr.

Gilbert Remulla, who is also the NP spokesperson, said he visited Ampatuan in April when the latter was confined to a military hospital in Davao City.

"Yes, I did it, I don't deny it," Remulla said when asked by the Inquirer to confirm a report that came out last week.

"But I don't want to elaborate on it for personal and security reasons. Every parties will understand. But my stand against the Maguindanao massacre is even stronger than before. The victims of the massacre must be given justice and the prime suspects should be tried," he said.

On April 15, Ampatuan's son Andal Ampatuan Jr., mayor of Datu Unsay, Maguindanao, who stands accused of carrying out the country's worst election-related killings, was seen on national television wearing two NP ballot IDs at Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City where he was transferred from the National Bureau of Investigation in Manila.

On his wrist was an orange bracelet with the name Manny Villar in white letters set in and a purple barrel with the name of NP senatorial candidate Gilbert Remulla in orange letters.

The image of Andal Jr. coupled with reports that Remulla had visited the older Ampatuan, who has gunshots in his hospital room in Camp Panacan in Davao City last month fueled speculation that the Ampatuans were supporting Villar, who is running for president.

On April 20, Andal Jr. called a press conference at the Metro Manila District Jail in Camp Bagong Diwa where he announced that the Ampatuans were supporting presidential candidate Benigno Aquino III. Wearing a yellow ballot ID, he smiled and even flashed an "L" hand signal associated with Aquino.

The Ampatuans are accused of orchestrating the mass killing of 57 people to stop a rival politician, Esmael Mangudadatu, from running against Andal Jr. for the post of Maguindanao governor in the May 10 elections.

Fellow candidates react

NP senatorial candidate Adel Tamano said "Gilbert did the right thing by admitting (he had met with the elder Ampatuan) but I am unhappy with the fact that he went there."

Tamano then urged Remulla to say categorically that the "NP did not, in any way, empower you to go there."

"We will never seek any endorsement from the Ampatuans," Tamano said.

Remulla replied: "I think it should be clearly stated that my visit had nothing to do with politics. It was for safety and security reasons. As a person, you'd understand."

Martin Lim, the 23 year-old stepson of detained NP senatorial candidate Col. Ariel Querubin said his father would not hesitate to bolt the party if it were proved that there was a secret alliance between the NP and the Ampatuans.

"I am glad it was clarified that it was a personal and exclusive visit. My father, when he was a Marine brigade commander, [seized] several firearms belonging supposedly to the Ampatuans. We will never ever be party to any secret alliance with them," Lim said.

"And I will be the second to leave," Tamano added.

NP senatorial candidates Gwen Duavesi, Toots Ople and Mon Mitra who were at the press conference did not comment.

Remulla was reluctant in saying that he did not seek the support of the Ampatuans in the elections.

Remulla is a brother-in-law of Rigldel Asmea, the lead lawyer of the Ampatuans.

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Poll violence toll: 27 dead

SO FAR, 27 PEOPLE, INCLUDING FIVE candidates, have been killed and 37 others injured in election-related violence since the start of the election period on Jan. 10, the Philippine National Police (PNP) reported yesterday.

The numbers are much lower than that in the two previous national elections, according to Chief Supt. Leonardo Espina, PNP spokesperson.

"This is a testament to the success of the PNP's programs to minimize election-related violence this year," Espina told reporters at Camp Crame.

Quoting from the latest report of the PNP National Election Monitoring Center, Espina said 20 persons survived 75 election-related attacks.

Among the fatalities were a mayoral candidate, 16 barangay officials and 10 supporters of candidates.

Thirty of the injured were likewise supporters of candidates.

Espina said firearms were the most commonly used weapons in the attacks.

"That is why we started our Security Control campaign as early as last year," he said.

Since the 2004 national elections, the PNP recorded 140 killed and injured in 120 incidents in the first 90 days of the election period.

In the 2007 midterm elections, 181 persons were either killed or injured in 242 poll-related attacks in the same period.

Aside from the PNP's firearms control program, Espina attributed the "significant decrease" in the number of election-related attacks to the designation the police had set up nationwide and the campaign against private armies.

Marlon Ramos

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  Relay Run
- **10 Stations**
  for Run Round Laguna de Bay
- **Support**
  Laguna de Bay watershed reforestation and conservation

Race Route

DAY 1	Distance
Frontera Verde (Tiendesitas)	0
Susat Brgy. Hall, Mt. Oveerest, Susat	17.40
SM Sta. Rosa, Laguna	19.00
Sucat, Colombo City	13.60
LDA Office, Calauan, Laguna	18.00
Provincial Capitol, Sta. Cruz, Laguna	19.50
DAY 2	
Provincial Capitol, Sta. Cruz, Laguna	0
Siniloan Municipal Hall	23.40
Jala-jala Municipal Hall	25.00
Tanay Town Plaza, Rizal	23.70
Binangonan Municipal Hall	20.00
Frontera Verde (Tiendesitas)	27.00

Prizes

1st Place	350,000.00
2nd Place	200,000.00
3rd Place	100,000.00
4th Place	75,000.00
5th Place	50,000.00
6th to 10th Place	15,000.00

Lap Awards

Lap Prizes will be awarded at Php5,000.00 each runner with the best time in each of the 10 laps

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Correction

BAYAN MUNA nominated candidate Rep. Satur Ocampo wrote in to correct the wrong impression, he said, that may have been created by the caption—"WAITING FOR VOTE"—of a photo showing him in ignore mode that was published on Page A2 of the April 26 issue of the Inquirer. He said he was in ignore mode because he was featured by the Caribbean Alliance as an adopted Caribbean, as two of his children are married to former persons and he has three "partly Ignore" grandchildren.

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Bidding aboveboard, says Comelec official

By Lira B. Saberon

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (COMELEC) spokesperson Lauro Jimenez yesterday came to the defense of the poll body's executive director, Jose Tolentino, who is accused of purchasing automatic ballot box scanners ago despite an order to postpone the bidding process.

No order was defied, said Jimenez, since the 2008 directive that barred Tolentino from holding the bidding for the purchase of voter registration record (VRR) binders and plastic liners had been lifted before the actual bidding took place.

The bidding was won by OFC Depot Supply.

Earlier, Comelec lawyer Mokhtar Maglasino, in an affidavit, alleged that Tolentino had disobeyed an order of the Comelec en banc (as a whole) and proceeded with the bidding.

The bidder assumed with OFC was later scrapped after it was revealed that the bidder were "misrepresented" principal PSBA said.

The poll body is now investigating the circumstances surrounding the decision to buy the ballots. OFC has contracted the documents.

"What I remember is that the directive to hold the bidding in abeyance referred to [in the affidavit of Maglasino] was lifted by another resolution. What I understand was it was lifted by another resolution, so [Mr. Tolentino] were ahead with the bidding," Jimenez told reporters.

Jimenez said the statement of this denial to Maglasino's affidavit "speaks of the intent of the recent statement."

"Without that crucial element, it appears that there was something wrong committed. But if you include that, it is clear that there was no wrongdoing. So the intent is obviously to pin down a person," he said.

Sought for comment, Maglasino maintained that as far as he knew, the request to go ahead with the bidding for the VRR binders and plastic liners was not lifted and was never lifted down twice.

He also said that he found it "fishy" that there had been a resolution lifting the order to postpone the bidding, since the request to oppose the bidding was rejected twice.

Personal knowledge

He said his intent in issuing the affidavit was to "put the record straight" on the matter. He said he talked about the 2008 bidding in his affidavit because he had personal knowledge of it.

Maglasino's affidavit was submitted to a Comelec panel investigating the ballot secrecy folder deal.

Maglasino, who is detained with the office of Comelec Chair Jose Melo, said in an earlier interview that he was warned of the existence of a syndicate in the poll body and had chosen to be low in the meantime because he was concerned for his safety.

In his affidavit, he said that then acting Comelec Chair Romeo Brawner had directed Tolentino to hold the bidding for the folder and binders until after the poll body's finance services department (FSD) had presented a report on the Comelec's financial standing.

As far as he knew, he said, two requests to continue with the bidding were turned down and the body en banc was scheduled to hear a presentation of the FSD report on May 14, 2008. But Maglasino, Tolentino said, went ahead with the bidding on May 12.

COPW Serving and Protecting the Filipino Consumer
CONSUMER & OIL PRICE WATCH

AN URGENT APPEAL TO COMELEC: RESOLVE CONFUSION ON PARALLEL MANUAL COUNTING & OTHER CRITICAL ISSUES IMMEDIATELY

Consumer & Oil Price Watch (COPW) is gravely concerned about COMELEC's statement last Sunday *that it is too late to resort to a parallel manual count, and, its subsequent turnaround the following day, Monday, when it said that it had not ruled out the same.*

This statement is confusing, erodes the public's confidence in automated elections, highlights COMELEC's lack of transparency regarding its state of preparedness, and only reinforces COPW's doubts that the automated elections will work.

COPW appeals to COMELEC to immediately address and resolve the following issues:

1. There are **only 14 days left before the elections** and we do not even know when the distribution of the 50 million ballots to the 77,000 clustered precincts nationwide will be completed.
2. The distribution of ballots is a horrendous task since there are **1,631 unique sets of ballots corresponding to the different cities and municipalities nationwide.**
3. Even the mailed sample ballots with precinct assignments to guide the voters are hardly delivered.
4. There is **no adequate testing of the 82,000 PCOS machines** to ensure that they can handle the harsh conditions that can prevail in any part of the country.

COPW also urges the major political parties: Liberal Party, Nacionalista Party, Lakas-CMD, Pwersa Ng Masang Pilipino to help resolve the issues by:

1. **Taking the initiative in ensuring that the correct sets of ballots are delivered to the proper provinces, cities, and municipalities nationwide.**
2. **Taking the responsibility of reporting multiple registrants who must immediately be DISENFRANCHISED.**
3. **Identifying critical areas where 100% parallel manual elections must be conducted. Historically, the provinces with a history of violence and cheating according to the PNP and the AFP are the following: Samar, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Maguindanao, Basilan, Sulu, Nueva Ecija, Abra, Surigao, Zamboanga Sibugay, Seranggani, Eastern Samar, Western Samar, and Antique.**
4. **Conducting random manual counting in 15% of the precincts in Metro Manila and 50% in the provinces.**

We want your feedback

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Low pressure area spotted

THE WEATHER BUREAU YESTERDAY spotted a low pressure area some 310 kilometers southeast of Davao City which is expected to bring "widespread" rains over southern Mindanao today.

But it is not picking up speed and is not likely to become a cyclone, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) deputy administrator Nathaniel Cruz said.

Metro Manila continued to sizzle and temperature yesterday peaked at 36.4 degrees Celsius at 4 p.m., based on Pagasa's monitoring at its Science Garden in Quezon City.

It is normal that residents feel as if each day is the hottest because temperatures in the metropolis in the past few weeks have been hovering between 33 and 36 degrees, Cruz said.

The hottest day so far this year in Metro Manila was recorded on April 10, when the maximum temperature reached a sweltering 36.8 degrees Celsius at 3 p.m.

Pagasa has been saying the country should brace for hotter days ahead. Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Top YWCA exec here for meet

WORLD YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN Association president Rosie Brennan will be the keynote speaker at the YWCA of the Philippines' 100th National Triennial Convention on April 25-May 1 at the View Point Resort in Carmona, Cavite.

The convention theme is "The Power of 10: YWCA Survival Leaders."

The meeting will gather 100 women leaders from the 27 local YWCAs all over the country in highlighting of the convention will be the launch of the Power of 10 Fund-Campaign for the establishment of the 1st Leadership Training Center for Women and Girls.

Brennan comes from Australia where she is the UN Commission on the Status of Women Conference and the Beijing +15 where she headed the 40-women delegation representing the World YWCA.

The NSC committee is composed of chair Josefina D. Pineda, co-chair Ella Gonzalo de Guia and members Maria Corazon Fernandez, Patricia Marjorie Lambrecht, Elsie de Moya, Susana Milet and Charlito Villanueva. The national president is Florita T. Jose.

Vilma's disqualification sought over huge posters

By Kristine L. Alave

MANDAUE CITY (MI) – Vice mayoralty aspirant Vilma Santos-Recto should be disqualified from running for reelection for violating election campaign rules, according to a complaint filed yesterday in the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

The complainants—Arch. Leonard Tupaz Jr., Gilbert Macatangay and Atty. Jose Macatangay—said Santos' posters and billboards in the province were "legally infirm in their form."

Tupaz Jr., a lawyer for Mandaue rival, former Barangay Cesar Fernando Bandoja, said the incumbent governor's billboards were the "worst of banners."

He said the camp of Bandoja was "treating them as public service announcements but it's obvious that they are for the candidacy of Governor Santos-Recto," he told reporters.

On many of the billboards, the governor's face is prominently displayed together with reelectionist and opposition aspirants in the second phase of her administration.

The disqualification complaint filed on campaign material violations was the first of its kind to be filed in the election season.

Santos arrived thirty terms as mayor of Lapu-Lapu City, before she ran for the gubernatorial post in 2007.

According to the complaint, Santos' "gigantic" posters and billboards "are highly violative of existing laws and rules regulating the use of election materials, particularly on the proper size and places of posting."

Under the Bar Election Practices Act, candidates may post their campaign materials only in designated Commission Shares Areas and those materials should follow the sizes determined by the Comelec.

Otherwise, according to Jimenez, should not exceed two by three feet while streamers should be no larger than three by eight feet.

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Manny Villar's ma faces media to defend 'poor son'

From page A1

luxury among the presidential candidates faced the press in an orange duster.

Villar has pegged his core campaign message on his life story of overcoming poverty as a child through sheer diligence and hard work. Critics have since cast doubts on this claim, while one newspaper columnist has noted that Villar seemed to have forgotten to give credit to his mother for making ends meet for her nine children.

Cortes recounted what she called the tough times the family had when they were still living in Manila's market district of Divisoria, back when she sold fish at market stall No. 2295.

She revealed that "Manny was with me" on the days when she had to endure insults from fish traders to whom she owed money. One of these angry suppliers once struck her in the head when she couldn't immediately pay.

The same supplier went on to insult her, she said, for opening a checking account without a stable source of income.

"You may not believe it but we were really poor," she added. "(My supplier) didn't want to give us fish to sell because they wanted cash up front."

"I couldn't complain. ... All I could do was cry," Cortes added, eyes welling up and voice breaking.

On her son's critics, Cortes said: "They say they don't believe Manny or anything he's saying. They think Manny is lying."

"Diosmed Virgin Mary, bear witness for my son! Come to his defense!" she cried out, sobbing. "He's in such pitiful state. I've already endured so much hardship, suffered enough as the marketplace. Should my son still suffer like this today?"

Who 'used' mare first?

"Do you think I'm not hurt by what they're saying about my child?" she said. "I almost died because of this."

It was at this point that her now fruitful daughters—Gloria V. Benedicto, Vilma V. Ortiniguerra, Lourdes and Cecille—stepped the press conference and tried to comfort their mother, giving her a glass of water and massaging her arms. A female household companion was also called to check her blood pressure.

Benedicto had her cool when one reporter said that Villar's critics might look back at his family for clarity using their mother in his campaign.

"Sino ba ang unang nanggamit? (Who was the first to do it?)," she shot back. Benedicto then alluded to one of her brother's rivals who, she said, was the first to bank on his parents to propel his campaign.

"Isn't it that his posters also featured his father and mother?" Benedicto added. "He mother has already passed away but he's still getting her involved."

MANNY CORING. Corazon Cortes (in the center of media attention), says her son Manny was with her when she endured insults as a Divisoria fish vendor.

MANNY VILLAR'S mother, Nieves Cuyong, and his four sisters pose with the check sign during a press conference at the mansion's in Alfi Homes, Las Piñas, on Monday.

Benedicto did not name names but it was obvious to everyone in the gathering that she was referring to Erap.

'It's getting personal'

"Let them talk to me," she added. "Our mother is already 86 years old and she knows where she came from; we came from a poor family. Good thing she's still around to defend my brother."

"We're coming out like this only now because there are media issues, because very personal," Benedicto said.

Ortiniguerra said she actually didn't approve of the press conference arranged by the senator's media group, but "we were forced to. I do this because [my mother] was already hurting."

"Imagine what our opponents are saying? Of all the presidential candidates only [Villar] has come under attack. They didn't come to talk to us about what we have been going through. They don't have any evidence; they don't know about the life we had," Ortiniguerra added.

Benedicto also said her eldest brother had been maligned by critics and unfairly treated by the media, especially TV network giants GMA 7 and ABS-CBN Channel 2.

She asked the press to stand with Villar's cause (hardy before calling "hero" against the INP candidates.

Benedicto singled out ABS anchor Arnold Clavio and his cohosts Johnson Manuel Mercado and for their supposed bias against the senator.

'Stardust'

After regaining her composure, Nieves Cuyong even managed to launch into song as her four last guests to a few lines from her favorite oldie, "Stardust."

Her daughters said she would usually sing the song on the karaoke with Senator Villar.

Cuyong then made an appeal: "Pakiusap ko lang, pakisuyo ko lang. Maawa kayo sa inyong Diyos, please, believe in him."

"She took helping others comes from the heart. It is not for show. Poor guy. He may be poor back then but we're kind-hearted. Siser pity on my son. He has suffered so much."

Country's 'most hated man' digs in

From page A1

Department of Justice (DOJ), Agra acknowledged the widespread protest but dismissed what spearhead but he said he would neither resign nor create a new panel of prosecutors to review his action.

He told the record of employees that he himself would resolve within the week the appeal by five violator Gozales asking him to reconsider his resolution dropping the charges against the two Ampatuans.

"In all my 47 years, I never thought that I would ever be the most hated man in this country. And I say this knowing that this is not an exaggeration," Agra, reading from a prepared speech, said.

"The past 10 days have been harrowing, to say the least. There were a lot of spats, more than entered my mind. But one thing I did not question was the conviction I shared last April 16. I stand by that decision and the process I went through to arrive at it."

'I was'n paid'

He dismissed allegations that he was paid to clear the two Ampatuans.

"I will say with a straight face, on the honor of my father's name, I did not receive a single centavo from any quarter to release the resolution...or rule in that manner," said Agra, who assumed his justice post only about seven weeks ago.

He insisted that he reviewed the previous findings of probable cause made by state prosecutors "based on the evidence and arguments brought before me."

No new panel

He changed his mind about hosting the review possible to a new panel of prosecutors.

"Because it is like any other case where both the victim and the accused are accorded the same constitutional rights, I will not inhibit myself in resolving the MR (motion for reconsideration)," he said.

"I will not create a panel. My faith in my own objectivity has not been shaken for there is no reason for me to doubt myself."

There were only a few prosecutors in the crowd, which was made up mostly of DOJ employees and reportedly included employees of the Office of the Solicitor General, which Agra also heads.

'Utmost consideration'

Chief State Prosecutor Claro Arellano, who had last Monday's unprecedented public protest of state prosecutors against Agra's decision, attended the flag ceremony but stood at the sidelines.

With Arellano were Assistant Chief State Prosecutors Rutland Fadullon and Miguel Gudio.

The prosecutors nationally did not sing after Agra spoke. After the flag ceremony, they pinned black ribbons on their shirts.

In his remarks, Agra promised to "consult with the prosecutors involved and take their opinions and observations under advisement and give their recommendations the utmost weighing and consideration."

But his meeting with Arellano and Fadullon after the ceremony lasted only about 10 minutes.

No discussion

Arellano told reporters later that Agra called the meeting "just to tell us he'll come up with the resolution of the MR this week."

He said Agra no longer opened discussions on the merits of his resolution clearing the two Ampatuans.

"We said (he should) revisit his resolution. There are other points and other evidence to consider," Arellano said. "We have to wait for the resolution of the MR. ... We didn't discuss the merits of the case."

Arellano has assailed Agra's resolution for disregarding a witness' account identifying the Ampatuans who allegedly planned the Nov. 23, 2009 attack in Maguindanao province that left 57 people, including 32 media workers, dead. Fifty-eight suspects, 32 of whom were among those killed.

Arellano has also said it is puzzling that while Agra believed witness Rosay Dabagdag's positive identification of the other accused Ampatuans during the alleged planning of the massacre, Agra chose to disregard the same witness when he identified Zaldy Ampatuan.

Black reminders

Altogether, 197 people are charged with murder. They include 23 members of the Ampatuan clan. Of those charged, only 62 are in detention.

Arellano said the meeting was cordial. But he and Fadullon wore ties in their protest that Agra should reconsider his decision.

"We didn't talk about ours. He (Agra) didn't say anything," said Fadullon.

He said the prosecutors wore black ribbons "to remind us that there's still this issue hanging almost one decade that has yet to be resolved."

The daily protest rallies against Agra continued yesterday.

Nakatanggap na ba kayo ng mga paninirang text tulad ng mga ito? Huwag paniwalaan.

Please do not pass. Sayang lang piso niyo!

ANG KASINUNGALINGAN	ANG KATOTOHANAN
"Mar Roxas, ang nakaendorsan mo sa pabrap na naging ayenko ng E-VAT Law!"	**Hindi si Mar Roxas ang sponsor ng E-VAT Law.** **Ang totoo: Si Mar Roxas ang author ng TAX EXEMPTION FOR MINIMUM WAGE EARNERS LAW. Walang masama sa buwis. Ang masama kapag ninanakaw ang buwis. Dahil sa buwis nanggagaling ang panggastos ng gobyerno para sa serbisyo. Kaseme na ditto ang Makati at si Mayor Binay na nakinabang rin sa EVAT.**

ANG KASINUNGALINGAN	ANG KATOTOHANAN
"MAR ROXAS made a deal with the Ampatuans to work for their release with Gloria in exchange for their support..."	**Walang deal.** **Hindi kailangan ni Mar Roxas ang suporta ng mga Ampatuan.**

ANG KATOTOHANAN

MAR ROXAS
Highest Trust Rating: 74%
Pulse Asia Survey, March 21-28, 2010

Ito ang pinaniniwalaan. PLEASE PASS!

ANG PANININIRA O BLACK PROPAGANDA AY GINAGAMIT LAMANG NG IBA DAHIL HINDI NILA MAPA-ANGAT ANG SARILI NILANG RATINGS.

National Institute for Policy Studies

Mario Taguiwalo
President, National Institute of Policy Studies
Former Undersecretary, Department of Health

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, April 27, 2010
4th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 11:1-18
Gospel: Jn 10:11-18

The risen name for the feast of the Sunday is "Good Shepherd" and it is filled with hope for the portion of Solomon. The risen Jesus gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in doubt? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I have already told you but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name proclaim who I am, but you don't believe because, as I said, you are not my sheep.

"My sheep hear my voice and I know them, they follow me and I give them eternal life. They shall never perish and no one will ever steal them from me. What the Father has given me is greater than everything and no one can snatch it from the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Commentary

"The deeds I do on my Father's authority speak on my behalf; but you will not believe because you are not my sheep."

The great spiritual temptation is to profess to believe one thing and go on living exactly as you did before.

The spiritual life is only authentic when what we say we believe and the way we live are one and the same.

Parties come together for the youth

By Julie M. Aurelio

IT'S A RARE SIGHT when "yellow" meets "orange" and there are no fireworks.

Senatorial candidates from the Liberal Party (LP) and Nacionalista Party (NP) yesterday sat together in a restaurant in Quezon City, not to trade barbs, but to pledge their support for the youth.

In line with the color of the LP while orange is the NP's hue.

The candidates—LP's Ruffy Biazon and the NP's Abel Tesoro and Gwen Pimentel—signed a covenant affirming their support for the youth sector, particularly its right to an education.

"We cannot forget the agenda of the youth. We can be sure that we will always uphold their concerns," said Biazon.

Biazon, Tesoro, Pimentel, along with representatives of NP's Nikki Ocampo, Lito Atienza and Gilbert Remulla, spokesmen Sen. Lolodia of Proceso ng Muong Filipino and Likas-Kaya's CSEC's Silvestre Bello, pledged their support for the youth by signing the covenant "A Promise of Change."

In the covenant, the candidates promised to increase state spending on education up to six percent of the gross domestic product and negotiate higher and efficient tuition and other fees increases.

They also pledged to support the establishment of student councils and campus publications in all schools nationwide and to probe any violation of the student bona rights.

No representatives of youth groups such as the National Union of Students of the Philippines, College Editors Guild of the Philippines, Student Christian Movement, League of Filipino Students, Anakbayan, Kabataang Bulatlat participated in the signing ceremony.

Villar and candidate Sen. Loren Legarda were the youth's choice as president and vice president.

"We believe that Senator Villar has the character plus form for the youth, especially in how to make education more accessible for the poor but deserving Senator Legarda, on the other hand, scores with the youth in caring for the environment and upholding freedom of speech on the campus," said Anakbayan national chair Ron Reuco. With reports from Bernice Wolf

Barin: Calls by top gov't execs normal

From page A1

13 elections, did not try to influence the SEC to release from arrest the shares of his publicly listed firm Vista Land & Lifescapes Inc.

"It is not extraordinary that I receive calls from someone in Congress, the Senate or other government agencies," she said.

"I can't remember exactly [what was said] because that's two years ago," she added. "But I do remember that [Villar] never pressured the SEC" to make any particular action.

Barin said that in the five years that she had been with the SEC, there had never been any en banc meeting in which there was "an outsider" in attendance.

On Friday, the SEC began looking into documents that might possibly show irregularities regarding the movement of Vista Land shares, but she said that there had been no recall so far.

The business unit next reported that Villar had called Bacia Infanzon May and June 2007, as well as then Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) president Francis Lim to work release from escrow of 1.2 billion of the 5.5 billion secondary shares of Vista Land so these could be offered both as primary and secondary shares.

Benjamin Rixmark Inumerable, chief of the SEC's enforcement division, said he and his staff had never been told to do so by Villar.

Rixmark learned from Villar's statement of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN) in 2008 that he owned 99.99 percent of Adella Properties Inc. and 97.08 percent of Fine Properties Inc.

PSE data show that, combined, both firms own more than half (58.1 percent) of Vista Land.

Adella owns 23.9 percent of Vista Land's outstanding stocks while Fine Properties owns 34.2 percent.

Vista Land was incorporated on Feb. 28, 2007, to act as investment holding company and operate through business

BARIN: Nothing wrong with calls from lawmakers and top government officials

units—Brittany Crown Asia, Camella Homes and Camella Communities.

The business units are involved in custom real estate marketing for the high-end market offering luxury homes.

Villar has denied any wrong doing.

'One big liar'

At a joint news conference yesterday, former President Joseph Estrada accused Villar of lying. Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile said the PSE board was trying to cover up the deal on the shares supposedly covered by the 1.88-day backup.

Enrile also identified PSE chair Hans Sicat as his source of the confidential PSE board meeting minutes that showed some of the directors opposing the objection to the exemption of the Vista Land from the lockup.

Calling Villar "one big liar," Estrada said Villar lied when he said he never applied pressure on the PSE board that lifted the lock-up rule on his firm.

"The most incredible fact is that Mr. Villar did and this much colleague gave in to his request," said Estrada, the presidential standard bearer of Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino. He said that Villar "displayed behavior totally inappropriate for a high government official."

Minutes of meeting

Estrada hinted that he has in his possession the 1999 Best World (BW) Resources stock manipulation scandal, one of the grounds in the impeachment case against him that led to his ouster and subsequent conviction for plunder.

Enrile, who is seeking reelection under Estrada's party, said he obtained a copy of the minutes of the special meeting of the PSE board on June 29, 2007.

He said the document showed a member of PSE directors expressing their reservations about exempting Villar's almost 20 percent stake in Vista Land from the mandated 1.88-day lock-up period so he could sell the shares.

Enrile dared PSE directors to produce their own copy of the minutes and threatened to file falsification charges against those if they produce a document inconsistent with his paper.

He said his document came from Sicat, who he said was "burdened by his conscience because of what you did."

Enrile said Villar's lot was aborted by what he called a "cover up" of the PSE board when it acted in statement that Vista Land complied with the listing and public offering requirements of the exchange based on its records in 2007.

"The PSE board wanted to avoid amending its rules because that would require the approval of the SEC," he said.

FORMER President Joseph Estrada listens as Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile accuses MP presidential candidate Manny Villar of lying in his defense. Enrile also accused the Philippine Stock Exchange board members of trying to cover up for Villar when they said everything about Vista Land shares transaction was above board for a press conference at the PMP headquarters in Mandaluyong.

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CLASSIFIEDS

Jamby spends birthday on poor 'island in city'

From page A1

Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal, a member of the old rich in the Philippines, celebrated her 52nd birthday yesterday at Isla Pulo, a "very poor community, see without electricity and water source," located in the middle of Laguna de Bay in Sitio Ilaya, Brgy. Mendez.

Madrigal not only treated its residents to a lunch of lechon, fried chicken, pork adobo and ice cream, she formally adopted Isla Pulo, which she called an "island in the city."

She shared her birthday wish with the residents: "The presidential jogs contenders in the May presidential election may win the so-called surveys but I intend to win the votes of people's hearts."

She also had a birthday wish for the country: That "voters will support the candidate who will represent compassion and justice and who will fight for Philippine sovereignty."

MARIA with Presidential candidate Jamby Madrigal blows out the candles on her birthday cake Monday on Isla Pulo, Barangay Tawa, Navotas City, where she celebrated her 52nd birthday.

Free food, education

The independent presidential candidate expressed confidence that "the choice of the people will be the choice of the fight... a person who is touched by God."

She described Isla Pulo as a "symbol of 96 percent of Filipinos who have been forgotten by the powers and past administrations. It's just another neglected community. When you don't see it, you don't remember it."

"Win or lose, the best thing I can do is to give them free education. One of my foundations will provide them with scholarship grants. I also plan to establish a feeding program for its undernourished kids. I will try to give each [of the 200 families] here enough capital [to start their own business]," Madrigal said.

First candidate to visit

Isla Pulo residents, mostly migrants from various provinces, are engaged in garbage scavenging and charcoal-making.

Madrigal is the first presidential candidate to have visited Isla Pulo, according to local leader Jesus Valderrama.

"Isla Pulo is symbolic of the poor in the Philippines. If any of my opponents is elected president, he will continue the same neoliberal policies of [President Macapagal Arroyo]. And 96 percent of Filipinos will continue to be an island," Madrigal said.

On Cloud 9

Yesterday, Madrigal was on Cloud 9 after a "very encouraging" reception in her recent campaign sorties in Tagaytay City, Lemery, Taal Norte and Cuta, Batangas City.

While hefty loans, Jamby lemonless," her popular campaign giveaways, she was personally received by residents of Batasan, Bengard, La Union, Pangasinan, Bohol and Batangas.

During the 2004 senatorial elections, the same branches, along with the endorsement of actress Judy Ann Santos "helped me get over 13.2 million votes," Madrigal said.

She ranked No. 4 among the winning senators.

Homestretch

In the next two weeks, Madrigal is scheduled to homestrone Alley, hometown of her late grandfather Sen. Vicente Madrigal and will visit other Visayan towns. She will also go to Cebu, Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental in the Visayas, as well as mostly-western Mindanao, Cagayan Valley and Ilocos Manila.

"I'm not a rope traditional politician, so I do not only go to where there are many people. I go to reach the people. Fortunately, they come out where they are see," she said.

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Manila Water will undertake the upgrade of distribution lines which will cause temporary water supply interruption in the following portions of Marikina City.
Schedule: 9:00 PM, Tuesday, April 27, 2010 up to 4:00 AM, Wednesday, April 28, 2010
Affected Area(s): Barangays Nangka, Parang, part of Concepcion I, Greenland, Greenheights, Mayamot, Creek Row, Alernosville, Jam, Tumana, Fairlane, Nuvia Vill., Greenpark, Majestic, Suburbia, Kaliwan, Chateau, Lamayville, Monte Carlo, PDP Magsaysay and Tanguile.
Manila Water Company is advising all residents of the said areas to store enough water to supply their needs during the interruption period.
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* In Photo: Project Team composed of Comelec, National Printing Office, Smartmatic Total Information Management Corporation, Pitney Bowes Emtex Software and Hunkeler AG personnel at the National Printing Office on April 23, 2010.

Kodak salutes
The Commission on Elections (Comelec),
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Kodak thanks Pitney Bowes Emtex Software and Hunkeler AG for their invaluable contribution to the print project.

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GOADON: People who wanted to vote for me have changed their minds because of the surveys. PHILSTAR PHOTO

Ignore surveys, Gordon urges media

By Gaber C. Tordesillas, Jr. and DJ Yap

FOUR DAYS AFTER DEFECTING to run for the governorship, presidential candidate Michael Gordon yesterday said the media should just disregard election survey results.

Gordon made the publication of survey results legal, provided the president has consented.

"People are telling me 'Sir, you want to vote for you, but the surveys say you're not gonna win,'" he said.

Gordon said the publication of survey results only fuel people's "herd mentality" as election surveys may be "not valid and have no basis."

He said he wished the media would be sensitive than that (publishing survey results).

Good chance

Gordon announced Cortes yesterday in radio interview, he said that if people believed survey results, then election shouldn't no longer be held and the country should just believe the survey results to announce the winner.

Another presidential candidate, who is doing poorly in survey, also has long stopped looking at the numbers. Nicanor Perlas said he still rather look at others.

Perlas believes he stands a good chance of winning the race despite trailing in most preferential surveys.

"My feeling is still the same. I have an 80 percent chance of winning. Perlas told the Inquirer by phone Monday as he toured Naga City to woo voters.

The candidate placed last in the latest Business World-Social Weather Stations survey, conducted from April 10 to 20, which gave him 0.2 percent of the vote, along with Bro Eduardo Manalo of the Iglesia ni Cristo.

But he has remains suspicious of such surveys, saying he would rather rely on what he could see on the ground. "I don't believe those numbers. What's more important are the people I meet in our sorties," he said.

He cited the "overwhelming" response of crowds in the provinces he had visited, including even the home turf of President Diosdado Macapagal-Arroyo in Lubao, Pampanga, three days ago.

Asked what he thought he needed to win, Perlas said, "I just have to keep on doing what I've been doing—to meet as many voters and to motivate them to vote."

Perlas will go around Metro Manila in the next two days, and, for the last stage of the campaign, is planning what he called a "Lakbay-Kilalahin" motorcade from Quezon province to Metro Manila starting May 2.

Noy widens lead; veep race heats up

From page A1

falling showed that some of his core supporters did not agree with his top voter campaign style, Angeles added.

Deposed President Joseph Estrada remained in third place with 17 percent, down 2 points from 19 percent in the March 10-22 survey. Unreadable on this page. It was followed by former Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. (9 percent, up 5 points), Sen. Richard Gordon (2 percent, down 1 point) and evangelist Eduardo Villanueva (2 percent).

Sen. Jamby Madrigal, Nicanor Perlas and John Carlos "JC" de los Reyes did not get more than half percent each.

In areas of votes, Bonoan would have gotten 6.4 million; Teodoro, 3.5 million; Estrada and Villanueva, about 700,000 each; Madrigal, 1.17,000; and Perlas and De los Reyes, 70,000 each.

A total of 2,400 registered voters participated in the survey, which asked them who they would vote for by filling out ballots. The survey had a margin of error of 2 percentage points.

Undecided

Six percent of respondents, up from last month, were undecided about their presidential preference. The category includes those who supported disqualified candidate Bro. Eduardo Manalo and those who submitted unreadable responses.

Aquino said the black propaganda against him was the reason the ranks of the undecided had swollen.

Vice Presidential Bro. Tito undecided would make up their mind and they would know that he was to the job, "he said.

Aquino did not lose much of a headstart in February since the election period started in a bit. 24 to 28 names by March, but what about it? Villar by only two points (36 percent versus 34 percent), practically a statistical tie because the margin of error was 2 percentage points.

The LP presidential candidate's ratings have barely changed since Bro—37 percent in March and 38 percent this month.

But Villar's shifting ratings (from 34 percent in February and 26 percent in March to 36 percent this month) have given Aquino a considerable lead.

In the latest survey, Aquino led in all geographic areas and socioeconomic classes.

Aquino's lead over Villar was most pronounced among members of class ABC (11 points), where the former got the support of 43 percent and the latter, 22 percent.

Aquino was ahead by 13 points (36 versus 23 percent) even in the "taste" class D. The only category where he did not have a double-digit lead over Villar was in class E, where he only had a single-point lead at 32 percent.

Happy with results

Asked to comment about the latest SWS survey, Villar said, "It has long been a double-digit lead... But I'm happy with this. And I consider surveys just one factor that voters will consider in the election."

He said other "winnability" factors like the support of local officials, major organizations and voting blocs should be considered.

"Surveys are important but they are just one of the possible basis of election results," he said on the sidelines of a forum at the Ateneo de Davao University last night.

KD senatorial candidate Adel Tamano said he was not worried over reports that Aquino had gained a double-digit lead over Villar.

Enough time to catch up

Tamano pointed out that Villar had more than enough time to catch up with Aquino's lead.

"In politics, one week is a lifetime. So, we have two weeks, two lifetimes to catch up. Pa 'kaw month nalang to work double time," Tamano said.

He claimed that some voters were still undecided. "They will see that we have the most qualified candidates with a track record to speak of," Tamano said of his party's standard-bearers.

Tamano added that "Erap will be super happy without any bias, at the end of the day, his most important survey is the vote on May 10."

SWS poll not credible

Ernesto Ordiz a survey scientist accused by Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno their credible than that was elected by SWS. The Puno-commissioned survey showed that he lead already overtaken Villar, according to the former President.

"[Puno's survey] has 6,000 respondents. SWS only has 1,400. That's more credible than SWS," Ronaldo told reporters at the PMP campaign headquarters.

Reports have it that a survey commissioned by Puno showed that Aquino's new president in survey taken with 29 percent while Villar got 25 percent. Aquino remained at the top spot with 41 percent.

The survey was reportedly conducted from April 18 to 22 among 6,000 respondents. It had a margin of error of 2 percentage points.

"In the 2004 elections, the SWS as it polls showed that (President) Macapagal-Arroyo was in Metro Manila. What happened? She lost. In 17 municipalities and cities, GMA-ano it won in one," Ronaldo said.

Surveys can be wrong

Like Estrada, Teodoro doesn't believe, either, in the results of the SWS survey.

"While we look at the surveys, we don't really believe in them. We don't rely on them. Surveys have been proven to be wrong before, and this time, we will prove that the surveys are be wrong," Teodoro's spokesperson, Mike Toledo, said.

Teodoro could reimburse to be the support of 50 governors and 150 congressmen "who promised to deliver the votes because they believe in Teodoro's principles, platform of government and promise of change," Toledo said.

Secret candidate

A political analyst said the results of the SWS survey showed that Villar had failed in his campaign to shake off perceptions that he was the secret candidate of Mr Arroyo.

"That means that the convoluted maneuvers of Villar which he undertook in the last few weeks did not work," said Ramon Casiple, executive director of the Institute for Political and Electoral Reform (Iper).

Another political analyst called on the people not to be swayed by surveys in choosing their candidates come May 10.

"The way to choose [a candidate] is not through numbers given by survey groups," Bo Cilario Cudoz said in a phone interview.

Cudoz said people should study their candidates and make their choice "regardless of surveys or even political ads" put out by the candidates.

Cause for concern

The latest ratings are a cause for concern for Villar and his camp, according to Casiple. "Sir [Villar] has to reverse it. He is running out of time," the Iper official said.

Casiple said if Villar had to regain the trust of his previous supporters and show that he was not Mrs Arroyo's secret candidate.

Aquino's rumbustuous rise, on the other hand, could be attributed more to his having benefitted from the negative campaign against Villar. But Casiple said Aquino's numbers were "not moving much."

He observed that the recent negative campaign against Aquino did not affect his countenance. When the spill was filmed, Aquino was fending off what seemed out to be a fake-mistaken report on his psychological illness.

"They [Aquino's countenance] did not believe the negative campaign against him," Casiple said.

He also said Aquino should "not be comfortable" about his 12-point lead. "Anything can still happen. It's still three weeks to go before elections," Casiple said.

Perlas, for his part, Casiple said that the administration candidate's improved ratings were "too little, too late."

Black voting for Villar

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, HP secretary general, said Villar would overcome Aquino's lead.

"Our political analyst checking the ground knows are very confident that the 12 to 15 percent lead would automatically be cut by Senator Villar because there are many groups that have black voting, groups in local and national levels, many different kinds of groups that have already announced their vote for Senator Villar," Cayetano said at a press conference.

He said that a "below 35 percent lead... would be a good fight" because the two strongest rivals for the presidency.

"Within two weeks, this will stabilize and Senator Villar will be able to catch up," he added. With reports from Dorcas Quiocmanda, Aelbert Alcaraz, Norman Bordadora, Fe Zamora and Mike Navarro

Voting preference for President (in percent)

Name of candidate	Feb 24-28	Mar 10-22	Apr 10-19
Aquino, Benigno Simeon III	36	34	38
Villar, Manuel Jr.	34	26	36
Estrada, Joseph Ejercito	19	17	17
Teodoro, Gilberto Jr.	4	4	9
Gordon, Richard	3	4	2
Villanueva, Eduardo	1	2	2
Madrigal, Jamby	0.1	0.04	0.5
Perlas, Nicanor Reyes	0.1	0.1	0.5
De los Reyes, John Carlos	0.1	0.1	0.5

SOURCE: SOCIAL WEATHER STATIONS

Top party-list groups (in percent)

Bayan Muna	3.0
Gabriela	1.1
Ako Bicolnon	0.7
Akbayan	0.5
Abono	0.4
Alliance of Rational Voters Power Organizations	0
Buhay Hayaan	0.5
Anakpawis	0.4
A Teacher	0.7
An Waray	0.5
Abono	0
Ang Galing na Kooperatiba Pilipino	0
Alliance for Barangay Concerns	0.2
Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives	0.7
Ang Kapatiran	0.3
COOP-NATCCO	1.0
Bantay	0.5
Cibac	0.4
ABS	1
CIBAC	0
Bukidnon Paiboon Abanon Sug Bansa Banay	0.06
Ang Kasangga Mo Inc. Abot Kamay Foundation	0.06
AKBAY	0.06
ACT Teachers	0.31
Alagad	0.14
Alliance for Advancement of Filipino Women	0.14
Alliance Advocates	0.13
ABS-CBN Foundation	0.12
ALAGAD Philippines	0.12
Ang Kabataan Party	0.14
AANGAT-TUCP	0.12
Anakpawis	0.11
Anak Mindanao	0.11
Ang Bagong Bayani	0.06
Ang Ladlad LGBT Party	0.11
Association of Agricultural Educators	0.11
1 Pacman Party List	0.11

SOURCE: SOCIAL WEATHER STATIONS

Top 30 senatorial candidates (in percent)

Aquino, Benigno Simeon III	54
Joker Arroyo	50
Defensor-Santiago	46
Juan Ponce Enrile	46
Pia Cayetano	38
Francisco Tatad	36
Manuel Roxas II	35
Panfilo Lacson	34
Gordon, Sergio Osmeña III	29
Escudero, Francisco Joseph	29
Villar, Manuel Jr.	28
Gordon, Richard	27
Revilla, Ramon Bong Jr.	25
Zubiri, Juan Miguel	25
Estrada, Jose Jinggoy III	25
Escudero, Francisco Chiz	24
Osmeña, Serge	19
Arroyo, Mike	18
Aquino, Kris	18
Jalosjos, Romero	18
Recto, Ralph	17
Cayetano, Alan Peter	15
Legarda, Loren	15
Honasan, Gregorio	14
Pangilinan, Francis Kiko	13
Trillanes, Antonio	13
Aquino, Bam	13
Binay, Jejomar	12
Ejercito, Jack	11
Villanueva, Eduardo	11
Fernandez, Eddie	10
Ramos, Mitos	10
Libre, Nene	10
Abad, Florencio	9
Jalosjos, Romero Jr.	8
Ong, Lungay	7

SOURCE: SOCIAL WEATHER STATIONS

Roxas still on top; Binay edges Legarda

From page A1

Binay's ratings have been on the rise since December, while Legarda's have been dropping.

The ratings of other vice presidential candidates are as follows: 3 percent for Benasen Pimentel, 2 percent for Edu Manzano, 1 percent for Bro. Eddie Villanueva and less than half a percent each for Dominador Chipeco and Jose "Pepe" Avelino.

Senatorial, party-list race

In the senatorial race, confirmation for Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. and Jinggoy Estrada remained ahead of the pack.

The contending nine candidates have consistently been on the list of 12 possible winners since December, according to SWS. (See list on this page.)

In the party-list race, Bayan Muna leads 12 groups most likely to gain at least one seat in the House of Representatives. The militant group garnered 3.0 percent.

The SWS said 29 other groups could get at least one slot, using the seat-computation introduced by the Supreme Court in a ruling on April 12, 2009.

VOTING PREFERENCE FOR VICE-PRESIDENT (February to April 2010)

Source: SWS and BusinessWorld

The high court changed the formula for allotting party-list seats last year, making the two-percent threshold and narrowing the number of party-list seats. This was in order to fill up the party-list slots equivalent to 20 percent of the House seats, as prescribed by the Constitution.

The Comelec followed the new Supreme Court formula in computing the number of party-list seats in the 2010 elections.

The party-list system was established in the 1987 Constitution to enable marginalized sectors to participate in legislation. They are 187 party-list groups vying for a seat in the 57 reserved House seats in this year's elections.

Asked about the SWS survey, Secundo said he no longer believed in opinion polls.

He said the percentage of votes stopped increasing when he ended his subscription to the survey results.

Secundo said, "The moment I stopped paying for the surveys, my ratings no longer improved. Before, when I was still subscribing, my points were increasing." Inquirer Research staff/Aelbert C. Tordesillas Jr.

NTC checks child porn

THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS Commission (NTC) is tightening its rules to check the proliferation of child pornography on the Internet.

A draft circular issued this month showed the network regulator plans to order Internet service providers (ISSPs) to report to the Philippine National Police and National Bureau of Investigation any instance where Internet users in the Philippines were caught accessing adult content involving minors.

"The notification can be by telephone, text, through online mediums or through any other source. The information shall include, among others, the login/access in Internet sites on child pornography," the draft said.

The NTC will also order network providers to install software that block Internet users in the Philippines from accessing the illegal content available on the Web.

"The software shall be able to continuously identify all websites carrying child pornography materials and block or filter access to such websites," the draft said.

The rules were drafted in compliance with Section 9 of Republic Act No. 9775 which requires the NTC to come up with rules and regulations on the installation of filtering software that will block access to or transmission of any form of child pornography. Pinoy Ako Ahmee Ailla

6.9-quake strikes between RP, Taiwan

TAIPEI—A MAGNITUDE 6.9 earthquake struck in an ocean area south of the Philippines yesterday and was felt throughout Taiwan, officials said, but there were no immediate reports of damage.

Philippine authorities forecast little damage after the 10:39 a.m. quake struck 300 kilometers off the Batan Islands and 214 kilometers southeast of Taiwan.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said tsunamis on coastlines within 1,000 kms of the quake's center were possible.

Philippine officials warned people living on the coast to watch for tidal surges but did not think they would be big enough to cause damage.

The United States Geological Survey put the quake at a depth of 30 kms, while Taiwan's Central Weather Bureau said it was 20 kms deep and registered 6.6 on the Richter scale.

The quake shook buildings in Taiwan's capital, Taipei.

Earthquakes occur frequently in this seismically active stretch of the Pacific basin.

One of Taiwan's worst recorded quakes occurred in September 1999. Measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale, it killed more than 2,400 people and destroyed or damaged 50,000 buildings.

An official of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (Meco) in Taiwan yesterday said no Filipino casualties have so far been reported in Taiwan.

Meco wishes representative Antonio Basilio said the agency would continue to coordinate with its offices throughout Taiwan and monitor the status of some 75,000 Filipinos there.

"Fortunately, Taiwan has heightened preparedness for natural disasters like earthquakes and its building codes to help ensure structural integrity against earthquakes are among the world's most stringent," Basilio said. Reuters, Jerome Aning

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MANILA NORTH HARBOUR PORT INC. :

A Vision for Modernization

The Manila North Harbour Port Inc. (MNHPI) lays down its anchor for service with four-pronged moves involving reduced port fees, worker benefits and tenure, as well as passenger comfort and maritime education.

PPA General Manager Atty. Oscar M. Serilla (rightmost) led the formal rites to turn over operations of the port to the MNHPI. In photo, after the ceremonial presentation of the port's golden key are, from left, Mr.Jose K. Lim, MPIC President; Dr. Mikee L. Romero, MNHPI CEO and President; Mr. Manuel V. Pangilinan, MPIC Chairman, and GM Atty Serilla.

Dr. Mikee L. Romero, CEO and President of the MNHPI, announced the start of the 50 percent discount in port tariffs.

He also said no port concession fees whatsoever are being levied by MNHPI until major infrastructure are set up.

Tariff reduction is among positive changes under the 25-year modernization contract of the Philippine Ports Authority with the MNHPI, the joint venture of the Ronnie-led Harbour Centre Ports Terminal Inc., and Metro Pacific Investment Corp. (MPIC) under Mr. Manuel V. Pangilinan.

The Manila North Harbor, an important domestic passenger terminal and cargo port, will undergo a P163 million expansion project with the construction of world-class facilities for enhanced travel and trade. Scheduled in phases, works will include port rehabilitation, dredging of port waterways, computerization, introduction of new cargo handling equipment and construction of a modern passenger terminal.

The MNHPI has already delivered a total of 139 new equipment, which is 38 percent more than the contracted number.

The sum of P42 million has recently been paid the PPA to cover contracted commitments for the first quarter of this year.

Substantial savings, cost-efficient service for clients

Formal turnover of port operations to MNHPI took place last April 12, 2010 with ceremonies spearheaded by PPA General Manager Atty. Oscar M. Serilla. The PPA chief expressed total confidence in the new operators' ability to transform the port into a Philippine showcase for service and excellence.

Mr. Pangilinan's MPIC holds a majority interest in MNHPI. Its subsidiaries including telecommunications and transport while the Romero' Harbour Center set Philippine maritime record for fast, safe and efficient service that redound to substantial savings for clients.

Building facade and interior concept represent MNHPI's vision for a modernized port at the North Harbor. (MNHPI website)

Port workers as key partners

More than P100 million has been released as advanced payment of port workers' post service benefits as part of its commitment.

The consortium already absorbed over 1,000 port workers in accordance with its agreement with the Association of Stevedore and Port Workers North Harbor. Some 1,000 to 10,000 workers are set to be hired for the project.

Labor uplift is a key element in the plans for the port. "North Harbor's service features are to be carried out by people who aim to improve its skills and discipline, and who have pride in their work. This would uplift and favorable working conditions," Romero said.

"We aim to give the country the dignity that its people deserve with a port that reflects the Filipinos' true spirit of hospitality and caring through efficient service. Our people are our most valuable asset," he said.

Over the past decades, the port had operated with outdoors facilities amid a deadly rat ornament.

Accomplishing for the country, a passion that runs deep in Romero's blood, has also been seen in the public concerns of the Philippine teams he managed in the Asean Basketball League, the 2007 Southeast Asian Basketball League and Southeast Asian Games.

Port workers, who follow local basketball, know well the five-year record that Romero's Harbour Centre team "Batang Pier" had set with the Philippine Basketball League. His team "Batang Pier" is a salute to the sturdy and persevering qualities that pairs men possess.

Passenger terminal befitting the Filipino spirit

With the investment terms, its enlisted services broadened, Romero, together with Pangilinan, brings to MNHPI this vision for forwarding accomplishments by the Filipinos.

To push for exceptional achievements in view of long-held maritime traditions, plans are afoot by North Harbor's Mariner Museum. Relics, documents, photos and artworks would all together tell the story of the Filipinos, his spirit and the seas. "We recognize the Manila North Harbor Port's role in motivating our youth to aspire for a better future, considering our maritime resources," Romero said. Archipelagic Philippines provides the world's biggest number of seafarers, by nationality.

The Mariners Museum further enhances the well-designed and convenient passenger facility that will rise at the North Harbor. Yet pleasant and warm send-offs and welcomes of passengers and travelers, the service facility is among improvements itself invested by the travel and tourism industries to further boom domestic travel.

"More than Php100M advanced for port workers' past service benefits as voluntary move to address labor concerns"

Port workers receive past service benefits advanced by MNHPI with the release of P100 million by MNHPI to cover this labor concern.

Globe NegoStar inspires SMEs in Batangas

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Fear of 'Garci'

MEMORIES OF THE INFAMOUS "HELLO, GARCI" incident in the 2004 presidential elections are haunting the elections on May 10 and making many people fearful and uneasy. They say that automated elections will make it possible to announce the poll results in two days or possibly even in one day, but they ask if these results will be competently accurate and credible, or whether they will be tainted by an "automated Garci."

EDITORIAL

One of those warning against an automated tampering of the poll results is Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, an information technology expert and innovation consultant. He said he noticed early on that the automated election system had "several vulnerabilities, including the danger of the precinct optical scan machines being infused with self-erasing malicious software (malware), questions about the PCOS source codes which were never subjected to independent validation and the secure transmission of election data."

De Venecia said a Princeton University study had found that the PCOS machines could be infected with a malware that could do automated vote shaving and switching. What is worse, he said, is that the malware has the capability to automatically erase itself and thus it cannot be detected easily.

Augusto "Gus" Lagman, another IT expert who has had a long experience with the repairing of election results, also warned of major glitches in the coming elections. He said that only Smartmatic holds the keys or the passwords to the PCOS. He recalled that in Wao town during the elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, a machine registered a zero vote and when it was reported to the Comelec and Smartmatic, it was Smartmatic in Manila that "fixed up" the results of that machine.

Lagman said this was an example of how poll results could be "manipulated" from a faraway site as it is only Smartmatic that has control of all the keys.

He also raised the possibility of a "cheating" program being installed in the PCOS machines to be used in the automated elections.

The Makati Business Club, the Management Association of the Philippines and the Finance Executives of the Philippines, together with Alpajaro Agrikultura, also warned of glitches in the automated election system. In an open letter, the four groups said the "credibility of the elections has suffered because the Comelec reviewed many of the safeguards that were initially set in place—source code review, ultra-violet mark checking and authenticity checks through digital signatures."

The four groups said that the credibility and acceptance of the poll results could be restored by having a parallel manual count for certain positions such as president, vice president and senators. They said that could be undertaken at an additional cost of not more than P800 million and would last an additional one day to two days.

The Comelec is opposing a parallel manual count, saying that there will already be a random manual audit in 1,145 randomly selected precincts out of about 76,000 nationwide. As this was being written, the Comelec was scheduled to rule on the proposal for a parallel manual count.

Whatever happens, a check on the automated election system has to be carried out. It will be remembered that when automated teller machines (ATM) were first introduced (and indeed, even now) bank clients still manually counted the money they were withdrawing from the machines. Machines can also make mistakes and so a manual check has to be done.

We hope that a mutually agreeable setup could be agreed upon to serve as a check on the automated election system. It must be remembered that this is the first time that an automated election will be held nationwide. We have not gone through an intermediate stage, where a hybrid of automated and manual systems would have been used. For all we know, the fears being expressed now are simply a general indication of a fear of the unknown. But then again, the record of the Arroyo administration and the Commission on Elections does not inspire complete confidence.

We hope, for the sake of the credibility of the coming elections, and for the sake of the political stability of our nation, that a mutually acceptable system could be agreed upon so that an "automated Garci" could be prevented in the May 10 polls.

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'MAD': Round 2

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"MUTUAL ASSURED DESTRUCTION" IS THE 1960s doctrine on nuclear annihilation. Countries were safest when the other side faced retaliatory obliteration. Mad enough.

"When the gods would destroy, they first make mad." Luckily, no one went bonkers and pulled nuclear triggers, after the Soviets smuggled intermediate Cuba. Thus, we are alive today.

Local politics scaled down, reverberations of MAD. Today's campaign reels from Round 2. The first Philippine president convicted of plunder accused the former female president of pilfage.

MAD Round 1 saw Senators Panfilo Lacson and Miguel Zubiri trade each other. Their female spenders hosted to MBDA rules of engagement: "First first, die second."

Busy counsel Jurbey and monthly bob dazzle his police chiefs, Lacson said. He wrong PLDT phone lines from subscriber Adenac. To attempt to force Manny Pangilinan. 6 video of Erap playing high-stakes baccarat surfaced and casino worker Edgar Bonzon was robbed out. Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force officials were linked to the murder of publicist Salvador Dacer who had shocked documents on the Palace in the first World court case.

Lacson allegedly had Dacer and his driver "salvaged." Jinggoy Estrada retorted that he plotted on Lacson the throwing finishing touches, the rub-out of a Western Mindio police officer, etc. Ex-cop Rolando Mendoza and his 9-year-old girl were shoved from a helicopter in to restore off Corregidor.

"Both camps have the goods on each other," wrote business columnist Isidro Cuillo-Ribo and. "Together for as long... (they) were a troubled item." Coconuts slapped back.

In MBD Round 2, both sides claim to have the goods on each other. Their intent is now a draft exchange of who killed whom.

Through phone calls, newspaper-crashing literary and Exchange Commission meetings, Erap got the agency to realize down a back up provision, Erap claimed. That manipulation (denied by the SEC) saw Vista Land & Lifestages cash in big.

"Hello, Fe. Hello, Francis!" was the headline on Villar's calls to Fe Barin, SEC chair, and Francis Lim, then president of the Philippine Stock Exchange.

"Hello, Garci," President Macapagal-Arroyo began her bugged call to Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano. They discussed how best to the ongoing Mindanao vote count, it was important she be "seen" on television TV.

"Hello, Serve," Erap called then SEC Chair Perfecto Yasay assigned a Villar spokesman. Estrada wanted the SEC to clear stamp Dante Tan on the 1999-00 scandal. Erap stood firm under Senate questioning.

In January 2001, former Finance Secretary Edgardo Espiritu told the impeachment trial that Estrada owned—and profited—from shares in the Resorts Corp., a gambling company at the core of massive stock manipulation. Espiritu resigned from the Cabinet.

Jinggoy earned 800 stock points in both 3,200 pesos—and then sold them. Tan nominated points. The SEC wrote a "the biggest disrepute manipulation scandal," national leaders Ramon Gabang, Villar's legal counsel.

"I broke no law," Villar retorted. Estrada insists the media only the public interest in showing him guilty.

"He who accuses must have clean hands." Have MAD Rounds 1 and 2 repeated that ancient principle?

"Erap wants to Villar to a duel," Sen Sotto summoned. Villar responds that Erap is a weak. "Who are we to disagree? When it comes to money, everyone is of the same religion."

So far, both skirt a crucial 2007 incident. Then Speaker Villar stumbled the Lower House's opening prayer, skipped the roll call, bypassed a full vote and then banged the impeachment case against Estrada to the Senate.

Did Erap quote Charles de Gaulle to Villar? "Because you think Jesus eaten cold," the imperious French president said.

Opening one can of worms, however, deserves another. August the SEC heard to unsophisticated Dacer-Corbito murder case and Villar to dodge questions on the C-5 highway investment. Fog Bog burning from scenes the Sarcillo, Lagmin, land grab. Villar and Estrada will be assuring each other's mutual destruction as the campaign pounds into the homestretch.

"Is it not time to persuade friends still seeking the presidency to unite behind the most trustworthy candidate?" asks Jesus Jurmitsu of Management dean Edilberto de Jesus. We did that in 1986.

Cibo Teodoro and Dick Gordon fought the good fight. Now they should "unite behind a genuine opposition candidate... (That idea) is the best way we have to evade the manipulations of the electoral process."

De Jesus makes a pitch for Sen. Benigno Aquino III. "He will respect the political process and help restore a level playing field."

The options have been (post-Inday Chavez) of Jinggoy Estrada, Lacson and possibly Bong Revilla's support for Villar. (The country cannot allow Villar-over) to maintain their hold on our political, social, economic, academic, even religious institutions...for another six years.

"If the plan to change is superficial many voters, prospect, (that) will affect the game to many new campaigns (media)."

Dying in a Verona game, Shakespeare's Mercutio spits out what many Filipinos think of MAD Round 2: "A plague on both your houses!"

• • •

Email: jaimbmercado@gmail.com

The Not-So-Great Unraveling

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

YOU HAVE TO WONDER WHAT ELSE IS GOING to blow back on Manny Villar. Everything already has.

He started out campaigning on the theme of being champion of the poor, got 1000 of talkage from the billion he spent on ads, not least Dat play-casting out to mostly be was a simple, trustworthy, fellow (no small irony there because if anyone can now relate to the poor it is Dalphy who has been reduced to it, a star of the latter being invited by the size of his dividend, only to say the multimillionaire manager it wasn't helped by Willie Revillame mouthing extemporaneous for him and handing out cash "Showtime"-style—only one lucky 908, as Joey Salceda likes to put it, someone who got to be a billionaire by giving away other people's billions—that "their" campaign of it executed by making the poor wonder if the Showtime did not in the end just make them "feel better on."

Then he had to overdo things and say as though it wasn't enough to be seen to relate to the poor, that he could identify with the poor because he himself was once dirt poor (before becoming filthy rich), as the poor his family couldn't afford to plant his brother who had fallen ill from the jaws of death. Being a very definite pronouncement instead of a fuzzy supposition, it became a natural magnet for truly enthusiastic, for sheer abundance of class and like the plague, avoiding any reference to it. But not before trying to refute the ridiculous, affecting an injured tone. It didn't work, he simply couldn't pluck himself from the jaws of contradictions.

And what is now turning out to be the supreme irony of all, he had to choose the color orange to counter yellow, fearing that yellow would deluge the country pervasively last January and February, the false months. Yellow never did, for reasons known only to Aquino's handlers, but came to 2010. It's now the major offshoot (largest amount) seen in New Manila than yellow once. And for a while Villar rode on the crest of orange, asking the world, "Nakakagaya na ba kayo sa ilog spiritual?"

Then, like a bolt from the blue, came the infamy and family show in the senate, entitled "What you always wanted to know about C-5 and weren't really afraid to ask," and Villar was bathed in his family. And now comes the Administration family show entitled "What you never knew about Fees Lim and the SEC and PSE and couldn't ask because you were underwired a priority." It couldn't have come at a worse time as Villar has already gone on free fall. Now losing the presidency may be the least of his worries.

His first may be how to avoid wearing the orange sambalan permanently. The PSE affair, coming on top of C-5 has stubbornly conspired to mind the orange-clad crowd mostly arranged in rows and forming a column groaning spasmodically to the strains of Michael Jackson's "The Jibe." They were the inmates of a Cebu prison, of course, going through their routine in the jail yard, a production that became a sensation on the Net. When last seen of Macho Villar might end up leading the pack in quite so-called dance sensitive but in the same setting.

All of this courtesy of Juan Ponce Enrile, who has become a strange and tragic comic character in the contemporary story of this strange and tragic political season. When he is told, he will figure in the 40th friend and archenemy, and the archenemy and arch friend, of Erap.

He was the one who helped launch the 1600 fusillay that misdemeaned, courtesy of Juliet Cardinal Sin and Cesario Aquino, into Edsa. He was the one who launched the initial volley of coups to topple down the Edsa government of Cory Tadhe, he started out being opposed to Edsa, not least by being the incumbent proponent of the ideological Arroyo, the humiliatory and betrayer of Edsa, after being the insurrection supporter, along with Melchor Santiago, of Joseph Estrada. But he is also the one who has propped up the candidacy of Gary's son Mayong after it threatened to collapse of gut-incurred cancer by Villar's predilection.

Today, Mayong's lead over Villar is widening, but that is no thanks to his going up, that is only thanks to Villar falling down. And what a falling down it is, both of his legs—or all by a couple of large swings of the ax—by Enrile. Ito ng, of course, has gleefully joined in the second swinging—he just barely produced the documents against Villar in the PSE cases—and he must have been chortling, "Untili ang ang wedang pera," all the while Enrile was talking, remembering the time Villar was in his personal employ of bringing the cash and declaring, "The President is impeached." Erap was now probably thinking gleefully: "The would-be president is impeded."

The PSE and SEC, of course, immediately rose to defend Villar, the SEC saying it could not act when Villar, being then Senate President, had brought in dozen to tell its head Villar to do—though Enrile has documents to say to necessary—and the PSE saying it could not use the rule that Villar expressly violated, he plea to have its time behind Enrile released being positively to have the rule that he has the documents to improve its raises. That does not exonerate Villar, it merely indicts the SEC and PSE. Enrile's accusation is that Villar expressly got the SEC and PSE to go along with him by threatening them with a Senate hearing on their incompetence. And they did not. Birds of a feather flock together. Judiciais among them, which we hope they soon will be.

Some of the issues Senator Aquino will have unsuccessfully from here on. Bigger tricks are ahead, in the form of an automated election that promises to be the most corrupt ever, all to the nation. But, who knows? Maybe that, too, will prove to be the Not-So-Great Unraveling of the other elements of Villaroya.

And get her to wear orange, too.

'Somos o no somos'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

LAST THURSDAY I WROTE ON THE CHUCHU dance in the Cojuangco-voted Aurienda (aunts, based on an unbelievable series by GMA NEWS TV period but January, as well as PCIJ's documents and press clippings. But how much is the "migrant mother" of freedoms in the Philippines, Lucinda was acquired in 1917 by the Cojuangco family whose sister, Ramon Aquino, is currently leading in the 2010 presidential derby through loans from the GSIS and Philippine National Bank. Lucinda's acquisition by the family was that within 10 years to 6,000 hectares will be distributed free to bona fide sugar planters, and to lands members who were to pay in installments. Now 50 years later, the farmers' has been effected and the Cojuangcos have shown no intention to comply—until bankruptcy stares them to the face.

* * *

In 1980 the farmers went to the Manila RTC and the Department of Agrarian Reform to claim the case for them, but the Cojuangcos appealed. In January 1986, opposition candidate Cory Aquino, running against dictator Ferdinand Marcos, promised that "land-to-the tiller must become a reality." Marcos was ousted in February and that "it will apply to my family's Hacienda Luisita." That same year, she came to power. Six days before her revolutionary power ended, she issued Presidential Proclamation 131 and Executive Order 229 which mandated the compulsory coverage through a stock distribution option (SDO) where ownership of land titles the farmers were made co-owners of the hacienda as "shareholders." In March 1989, Executive Secretary Catalino Macaraig, Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado Estrella III and Justice Secretary Sedfrey Ordoñez filed with the Supreme Court a motion for reconsideration asking that the SDO be declared unconstitutional. The Court upheld the SDO on Sept. 26, 1989.

President Cory's EO 229 gave her power to proclaim—on the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) that would approve the DAR's for Luisita to. The outspoken Marcos Defense Secretary, who succeeded Aquino in the DAR, urged Aquino to inhibit herself as PARC chair and, as she recalled in media, "[Cory] did, but as a result I got kicked out of the Cabinet, personally for insubordination first."

* * *

The uncertainty over the hacienda's future is definitely contributed to the shabbier than expected in Mendiola on Jan. 22, 1987 and at Luisita's gates in November 2004. Over the decades it was also evident that the farmers did not get their 33 percent share in various land sales and conversion projects. When Luisa's gates were on a few days ago, while Cory dumbled in the Supreme Court to demand the lifting of the TRO obtained by the Cojuangcos in June 2006, against the revocation by the PARC of the 1988 SDO and its plan to push the distribution of Luisita's lands.

Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI), the marketing arm of the estate, was incorporated in August 1998 with 33 percent of common stocks for the farmers and 67 percent for the Cojuangcos, with the latter retaining absolute majority voting control manifested in the stocks given to be given to the farmers over a 20 year period yet, or until 2019. The farmers are fuming.

* * *

After the 2004 massacre, HLI announced the following June 9 that it had given out all the undistributed stocks to the farmers, about 75 cents ahead of the 2019 schedule, just by this time it was discovered that HLI had "double-bookkeeping" from banks without the knowledge of the farmers, according to the DAR and farmer Rene Capulong, who represented the farmers. HLI spokesman Tiger Mendiola confirmed that certain portions of the hacienda already belonged to banks because HLI could not pay the loans. Capulong also asserted that since the farmers were unaware of the loans and did not benefit from them, the burden of paying those belongs totally to farmers's family. He also asked the DAR to demand from the HLI management full financial accounting of this company, including the stakes at its loans and how they were used. But up to now HLI has not complied.

Perhaps the loans are so big and with probably unpaid interests compounding, the Cojuangcos' chances of paying them may be practically nil. Unless they fully pay them, however, the farmers will not receive their land by the deeds. The farmers would then lose the land they have been dreaming to own since 1967.

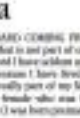
* * *

When Noynoy Aquino was completing his last term in the 13th Congress, it had conducted an inquiry into the delay in the implementation of the Luisita land lease. Expectantly, the overpricing of land acquisitions and the floating of project costs, it was found that the Cojuangcos had failed to fulfill its obligation particularly the overpricing in Luisita and the intervention of the late Miguel Rene Dalupan there. He only private stockholder along the 93 km (CTEX) project that was given first to the Cojuangcos as a result of the government's P13.7 billion federal colleague got wind of it and brought Noynoy to this congressman. Noynoy begged him to drop the Luisita probe, sobbing, "Pag-ibigan na natin to." That explains why Noynoy has been avoiding this issue in the interview "survey 1 to survey" done for in Congress, but the problem is that candidate Noynoy likes to portray himself in issue-specific.

* * *

The Philippine Constitution Association (Philconsa), chaired by Gonzalo Duenlla, has announced that its regular monthly meeting will be held at the Manila Hotel tomorrow at 6:30 p.m. with Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim as guest of honor. Lim is expected to speak on environmental measures to enhance a healthy and sustainable environment and current election issues in Manila. JP Negrel Nelle Teodoro-Gonzales will lead the recitation of the Philconsa Creed.

Absent mama



YOUNG BLOOD

Rica Villanueva

EVEN THE WORD SOUNDS AWKWARD COMING FROM me. One has to strain to use a word that is not part of one's daily conversation. "Mama"—it's a word I have seldom used, and it has an empty sound to me, because I have lived for most of my life without one. It isn't really part of my life. I know I was conceived by a healthy female who was burdened by me for almost nine months. (I was born premature and had to be put in an incubator.)

I have no recollection of a mother-daughter relationship. I don't even have the faintest memory of her. I have nothing that would link me emotionally with Mama. I was walked to the parish house/prison school by my aunt in my father, never by Mama. She had left me with my father for before I reached kindergarten. What memory would I have of her?

I know she was an financial support, although my name never mentioned. It is me at the time. The financial assistance was meant to make up for her absence.

My sisters talked about her and their experiences with her. I wanted to share mine too, but I had none.

I identified a woman in the photos sent from Australia, Manila, wherever she was at the time, as my mother. She had curly hair, fair skin and a wide smile. However, I had no idea why she was there, why she never visited me, why she did not write, or how she could leave me for so long.

But I could not have cared less. I was not even aware that one should have a mother and a father to form a family. But until I reached elementary that is.

There were teachers who asked me where my mother was. I wanted to tell them honestly that I had no idea. I was, however, taught to say she was working in Manila (that's where people usually were if they could not be located), as mother was somewhere in Manila.

I remember asking a student teacher if I could give my mother's they used to my name. She patiently explained that each cards was meant for my parents. I learned to tell the concentration a good. Grade 2 student could maintain while holding my full-loaded card). And then I told her I did not have one, but I had my aunts and they were the nearest things to a mother that I had.

A later point, one deep breath, and the student teacher gave me that "look." By that time, I had already grown accustomed to seeing that look from my teachers, classmates, classmates and other relatives. I got that look whenever I had to fill out a form. I remember feeling helpless since I knew what to write on the spaces asking for my mother's maiden name, birthday and age. I did not know. Heck, I didn't even know her. How would I know her maiden name, birthday, and age?

The student teacher did allow me to give the card to my aunt. But I had another problem. I had to make two cards for my two aunts. That was additional work! And as I wrote the greetings, I had an urge to raise my hand and ask if I should wait for Aunt's Day to give the card. To my young mind, it would be inappropriate to give Aunt's Day cards on Mother's Day. But being me, I decided not to bother me student teacher with such questions.

Mother would. I bother people at home with such inquiries. Mother's Day at home was just another day despite the commercials about perfect mothers and their families. No one explained why a mother was absent from the household. If my sisters noticed, they never said anything. I never said anything either.

"Ma," I'd've called her when I hear sisters in bed with her upon entering village. I practiced entering the word, hoping to promote emotion into it. I did not want to sound cold or too eager for a mother.

But I quickly found out that it did not really matter. The person who owned the apartment where we lived was a stranger to me. No matter how much I tried to enjoy her company, I was happier when she was not there. When you have spent most of your life without something, you can ignore the rest of your life without it. You cannot miss something you never had. You cannot long for something you never experienced. What she owned was hers. Their was no concept of "us" or "ours" between us. There just wasn't anything that would bind me to her aside from her name on my SSS/GSIS-related forms.

When I decided to have a mass the size of a fist in her lungs, I was bothered. The possibility of her death did affect me—somehow. I asked myself if her disappearance would affect me. Not really, I thought. I was used to not having her around.

I felt guilty when I heard my sister crying on the phone. I cried too, but it was because of guilt, not concern. I felt that I had to cry. It was the day after my sister's daughter's family reunion. I was not there. I had to work. I was not invited. I was not even aware that there was a family reunion. I was not even aware that there was a family reunion.

I was touched by the concern an officemate showed when I told her about my mother's illness. And that night, I cried because my officemate seemed more concerned than I was. I cried because I was touched, but because I cared about my mother.

Dislike, disgust, fear, helplessness, pity, unwillingness, greed, ass... I experienced all these during the four years I stayed with her. It helped me grow up. I have said sincerely were my constant companions.

"Unwanted" is the last thing I would use to describe her life. Unwanted is what I have become.

One of the early seeds in a game asks the question, "What do you fear most?" For 23 years now, my answer remains, "Being like my mother."

Before I start my own family I hope that answer will change.

* * *

Rica Villanueva, 23, works as an instructor at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños where she is also taking graduate studies in communication.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

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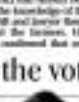
Protecting the vote



AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

EVERYONE IS AGOG WITH SPECULATIONS about the failure of elections some May 10. The possible reasons for failure range from what some have termed as "electronic fraud," that is, a program already set into either the PCOS machines itself or into the server that will read and transmit the ballots; or the computers to be used in canvassing that already has the pre-determined winners; the deployment of pre-marked ballots; sabotage of the machines by the removal of proper counting, transmission or canvassing of votes; and even massive disenfranchisement of voters through mismarked ballots, intentional misuse of the machines, or voters simply away from the polls.

Of these reasons, the last seems to be a distinct possibility as the anti-rational groups have sounded the alarm about how "difficult" it would be for the ordinary Pinoy to use the machines. Of course, they underestimate the intelligence of most Filipinos voters, or their familiarity with electronics and machines. ATMs are already commonplace, and DL games do not seem to have any difficulty accessing them—if they did, we would have a lot of "discount of complaints about ATM fraud or misuse.

More dangerous is the notion that fraudsters are so embedded within the Comelec, within Smartmatic-TIM, the primary technology provider, or international operators, that even within Team Luke which certified that the "source code" that is used in all the machines, that the results has already been determined and all of our votes count for nothing.

If some of you have come to this conclusion, I am not going on this to talk of how "complicated" the procedure would be, that would surely opt to my brain if convinced it would be useless to line up in long queues, touch their ballots, and feed them to the PCOS. That would be a sad day for democracy.

THE old fogey must confess at this point that she doesn't understand the technical and background to understand for the pros and cons of the parallel manual audit vis-à-vis the random manual audit—but regardless of what view prevails, what's most important is that voters be assured that it is worth their while to exercise their civil rights, that they can trust in not for the new ballots and feed it into the PCOS, and that by and large, their votes will be counted and their choices will make a difference.

The same day our media group hosted the National Printing Office where the ballots were printed, we noticed all the way to Comelec to visit the warehouses where the PCOS machines are stored, locked and padlocked for shipping to different parts of the country.

Omar Flores of Smartmatic-TIM explained that upon delivery from a factory in Guang hai), the machines are tested by representatives of the company, the Comelec and the National Computer Center, after which they are brought to the programming section for the insertion of local software. Each PCOS machine is then tested again before being placed in a package along with the printed specific software and necessary materials like marking pens. A battery pack is said along with each PCOS machine.

From the same warehouse, laptops to be used for canvassing are likewise prepared, along with the necessary forms and small generators to be used in case of a power failure.

* * *

FLORES ensured that there are a number of more (6) salespeople to be deployed in case of any need for emergencies.

A PCOS machine can run on battery power for 12 hours in case of a power failure, and canvassing can proceed as well with the use of the generators.

Technicians will be fielded by Smartmatic-TIM in case a machine breaks down or transmission fails. If the technician deems the PCOS needs to be replaced, as many as some 6,000 machines stored in various areas around the country in the meantime, said Flores, the HLI has been instructed to continue with voting (with voters marking their ballots) and to use the PCOS as ballot boxes. Once the replacement machine arrives, the ballots can then be fed into the machines and the results transmitted.

Once voting is over, the chair of the BEI is responsible for bringing the ballot box to the canvassing site, together with the data card used for previous specific information that contains a plus. to of "every ballot cast," promised Flores. So if anybody wants to know how many ballots got fed each set just to the "paper trail" of ballots, but also to the information contained in the data cards.

* * *

OF COURSE, many other things can go wrong during elections.

Violence could still be employed, intimidating voters and forcing them to stay home on May 10. Before then, as news reports reveal, cancellation and their accompanying fears also been shot at and ambushed, creating an environment of fear and tension, which again would discourage quite a good number of voters.

Or, voters may opt to vote, but after casting in in a precinct and discovering the voting? He may no longer need to protect ballot boxes with our bodies (since the results are automatic, lastly transmitted to canvassing centers and proclaimed on the spot—what, then, police and military forces should do their job in hot spots and prevent armed groups from doing their worst.

Lawyering to Flores implies how the voting would proceed on May 10, I began to visualize lovely town and exciting days when we would troop to precincts armed not just with ball pens but also flash lights, candles, a camera and cellphone, ready to document each day hours of veil. Can't we be happy that those days are behind us already? I for one look forward to the day when elections will turn to a matter of routine and routine.

One on one with Noynoy

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

IN HONG KONG, WHERE I AM WRITING THESE notes, the Star West Center of Honolulu is conducting its second International Media Conference. (The first was held in January 2008 in posBed Hotel Bangkok.) I was invited; I will be asked about Cory Aquino's role, and the process of succeeding to the presidency. But (to keep things in perspective) the discussion on elections in this is only one session out of about four dozen, with another session on "Asia's emerging democracies." Many of the sessions, in fact, will be on economic issues, involving the United States, or China, or both.

"The United States-China relationship," said professor Ho Lawrence of Chinese University is the opening session. "is not a yin-determined relationship." Perhaps, but its impact on the "new realities" in Asia and the Pacific that the conference seeks to understand is almost preordained.

* * *

For businessman Manuel S. Pangilinan, Lent began during Holy Week. That was when the news about the plagiarized portions of his commencement address at the Ateneo de Manila went mainstream. He has, since, handled the crisis admirably—accepting full responsibility for the mortal academic sin, resigning from the Ateneo de Manila's board of trustees and then declining the offer of the Ateneo to right its wrongs. He has put the matter in a strictly limited perspective, on the irreversibility of his resignation. But somewhere, surely, within the Ateneo de Manila community the lesson is being learned.

I thought the statement circulated by many members of the university faculty, taking the board to task for the narrowness of its perspective, was both candid and nuanced, and sweetened the convenience of MVP's response. But certain officials of the Ateneo association have found the teachers' statement offensive; I get the sense that these alumni think the statement was rather forced MVP to declare his resignation irrevocable. Perhaps it's only natural to personalize this positions among all responses to this matter that I've handled with, it is the only one that amounts MVP did not have the courage of his renounced resolution.

* * *

While only two more weeks to go before election day, I have time for only one more profile from the candidates' comparators. The objective of the exercise was, and remains, "to consider the candidates as they see themselves, to see them and their ideas in the perspective of their own terms." How close did Benigno Aquino III understand his campaign?

I haven't had too many encounters with Aquino, going all the way back to when as a now-inactive at my alma mater. I moved in one of the many volunteers who swarmed the Quirino Grandstand for Cory Aquino's first appearance as president at the Luneta. But he has always been available in the given moment, in Colonel Honasan's cause at "August Alex," I believe, he is the only candidate, and perhaps the only one among the politicians in this exhibit book, who scrupulously answers every text message. The answer might come several hours after, or even the following morning, but there is always an answer.

This doesn't sound like much, but in fact, given the demands of a campaign, it tells me something about the care with which Noynoy invests in his relationships with constituents.

It was therefore no surprise when some of the candidates on the Liberal Party slate, visiting the Inquirer, described him as "modest," always looking out for others. I don't mean to be facetious (who, after all, would be?) when I say that he is the John Lloyd Cruz of the 2010 elly season, the one who always says, "Sige" (Take care). Because of himself, in other words, as a type, every one's older brother.

Again, believe me, I'm biased; another word for the same miserable form that seems to have staked a claim to his family. I think it was those terms of loss to reflect on the meaning of the suffering of others and perhaps, on his own turn, he's dust. I realize his decision to consider a presidential run in the wake of the funerals could be considered as a politician's crudest attempt to make political capital from the grief of others, but I am so what he had chosen not to do when his mother was president (unlike the Arroyo brothers, he did not run for elective office when he could have). I think, in choose as before, that his response to the demands of his family name and his country is genuine and not by personal ambition but by wise measures to a family tradition of openness, or sense being in history.

Lastly, I think he was himself as tougher, more open to scrutiny, than his mother. We get a thin, for instance, from his funeral eulogy, when he spoke by way of background of a difference of opinion with her (resolved, reportedly, in Cory's favor) on the question of whether to run for office in 1986 he was originally for a boycott of the January elections, like the Grand Old Man of the Opposition, Lorenzo Tañada. (Do not know if he has since come to regret that decision.) Noynoy's eulogy for Cory, by indeed (no longer will ever work), but I think we might see more hardball politics than we would have been led to expect. Stoic statesmir known to many as Cory's only real dentist, son.

* * *

Many thanks to those who e-mailed suggestions on how I can get my hands on Anthony Reid's "Imperial Alchemy" expeditiously. I have contacted a couple of suggestions; I hope they will help turn lead into gold.

* * *

jnery@inquirer.com.ph; johnnery.wordpress.com

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LETTERS

Polls are about choosing best candidates

THE MAY ELECTIONS ARE ABOUT CHOOSING the best and most qualified candidates for positions. To media are saturated with paid poll surveys, campaign ads and black propaganda that are being spread out to misguide the electorate. Therefore, the electorate must think clearly and hard and choose well.

The problem of the country are varied, numerous and awesome. It is not enough to say "Kung walang corrupt, walang mahirap. Of there were no corruption, there would be no poverty." Senseless grand for its daydream sound like, but perfectly designed to say enough to raise this country around. Corruption can only be minimized, like never eradicated even if the president were Pope Benedict. More than corruption, two very serious issues confront our society today and which are the problem of all is poverty from which the next president must lift this country up. Poverty is the most inhuman form of misery and it is caused by a misman-aged, dominate economic, by other issues or disturbances, a result of too much hostile politics stimulated by a leader's provocative conduct in challenging constituted laws. The unresisting image of the country in the eyes of the world has prompted questions like, what is wrong with the Philippines? The proper question should be what is wrong with the Filipinos?

It is the subjective realization of the Filipinos and their endless political bickering that make their country look bad. The old cliché, "Let's change your government so we can move on," is not as easy as it sounds. What is needed is a strong leadership under a competent and honest president who can draw sound political ideas and sustainable economic policies which are vital for this country if it wants to become economically progressive. Seeking them, searching less. However, the first necessity is to be so much a a make; this country must not be entrusted to the hands of a mediocre president. Only an intelligent, dynamic, wise and sound leader must take the lead.

The May elections are another milestone and purchase for more improvement in the elections since '92 to 1. That demands we not grippel with high hopes and the promise of change that failed; it was supposed to be the turning point in the national memorial must realize and honest pain-ful questions, but the choice of Duke of Iraq I were gratitude but because complacency, public apathy and indifference and the poor stance of leaders allowed corruption to creep back in. The future of our children and the coming generations hangs in the balance and their future hopes rests. Let God grace wisdom wisely in choosing the right candidate.

—CESAR M. DE LOS REYES,
wcdlrey@ymail.com

Why even allow use of carcinogenic flour?

IT'S WEIRD BY THE TRIBE OF THE FOREIGN one must, I would maintain Turkish Ambassador Adnan Basaga and ask him to explain his irresponsible statement on Turkish flour.

On better call, drawer time persons may get to the practically endangering public health and the lives of Filipinos.

Early this month, Ambassador Basaga declared that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had found Turkish flour to be safe and fit for human consumption. But the FDA, at the time, had yet to issue the official results of its tests, whose did Basaga get his information? Or did he deliberately preempt the FDA results?

Basaga seems to be sorely lacking in diplomacy and tact with his recent statement that people in the provinces consume bread and noodles made with Turkish flour because these are scarce in low prices. The subliminal message in Basaga's statement is that poor people living in the provinces are the ones brazenly are consuming allegedly carcinogenic bread and noodles made with Turkish flour. Is Ambassador Basaga saying that poor Filipinos are lab-animals or guinea pigs in a laboratory experiment where they are made to eat toxic food—to find out if these are really toxic?

The official FDA results of tests conducted on Turkish flour showed what it said were "allowable levels" of benzoic-ate (a product used in cosmetics, plus. But why should we even face blood pool levels that are above the allowable levels? Are we considered guinea pigs for carcinogens? Can there be safe levels of poisons or toxic chemicals ingested by humans? I don't think so.

Ambassador Basaga is practically telling us that Filipinos are unlucky not carcinogenic [sic]. do not. We should not make lab-rats of Filipinos under made by research institutions in Turkey that found their flour to be contaminated with aflatoxin and other carcinogenic substances than can kill people?

I hope the Turkish ambassador is not telling us is that their flour, by contrast does contain cancer-producing elements, as the FDA tests has found. These carcinogens may not kill people overnight, but they accumulate over time and destroy healthy cells, leading to a slow and painful death for those who eat consume, mixed pan-te-salon a daily basis.

—JOHN HARRY VELO,
johnnie8_velo@mail.com

Recommendations on private armies almost ready

THE REFERS TO THE EDITORIAL TITLED "Campaign evidence." (October, 9/12/10)

Since days ago, we have been formation this filling our mandate. We also have been closely coordinating with the Philippine Statistical Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines and other law enforcement agencies against private armed group (PAG). Now on its fourth month, the commission is consolidating its findings after going around the "elevation ten spots" to analyze the intelligence reports and consult with stakeholders, political leaders and other stakeholders. In due time, the commission will submit to President Macapagal-Arroyo its recommendations, including short- and medium-term solutions as well as long-term remedial measures to curtail the problem of private armies in the country if we had been quiet, it was because we have been earnestly working to our tasks.

We are aware of the multi-dimensional nature of the problem of the proliferation of the variety of the gone issues to address the issue. Despite these concerns, we have accomplished the following, among others:

1. As an investigative body, collated, evaluated results of all executive meetings, workshops and field investigations and has crafted "key" concepts directly or through the deliberations of the Reserve armed program, vulnerabilities in the creation and monitoring of Calpas and CVOs and in the use of the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA), and reviewed existing laws and administrative regulations.

2. As the government's partner in the campaign against private armies armed instruments to the PNP and AFP for compliance, as part of immediate solutions.

Meanwhile, the Independent Commission Against Private Armies Report recommends the appropriate implementation of certain laws on firearms and explosives and the prosecution of the offenders. Several solutions have been proposed in the form of legislative amendments, the results will be made public in due time. The medium-term solutions involve the expansion, composition, institutionalization of armed forces of the country, monitoring and administrative orders that deal with the operation of community-initiated forces; command responsibility in the PNP/AFP and other law enforcement agencies; issuance and licensing of firearms; the imposition of penalty provisions for firearms law; and alternative methods of conflict resolution.

The comprehensive report will be submitted to the President within the month.

Incidentally, the commission is composed of Mahamid Mitra Ampatuan, Herman Basilio, Dolor Jimenez, Victor Ordonez, Bishop Jose de Dios Pueblos and Stillborn P dato (who was appointed after the death of some fellow-retired members), and retired Court of Appeals Justice Ishmael Bernabe. Tomorrow as chair.

We hope that this letter will enlighten the public on the progress of the commission's work. You assured that the commission is doing its best to be worthy of the public's trust.

—BERNARD E. BARANGAY,
Commissioner,
Independent Commission Against
Private Armies Groups,
Malacañang, Manila

Majority of Makati's village chiefs support Mercado

A SURVEY BY SOME THE MAY LATEST MAJORITY of Makati village chiefs favor Vice Mayor Jejomar Binay for the support of 46 percent of the more-than Vice Mayor Jejomar Binay has a nearly 24 percent. (Inquirer, 4/21/10). This is in stark contrast to the findings of the anecdotal or informal mayoral race survey I conducted in a few days ago. Mercado and Monsour del Rosario's (for councilor) campaigns around Makati, most especially in District 1. Twenty-three of 31 barangay chairmen have openly declared support for Mercado.

Aside from this, around 75 percent of village councilors, along with youth council heads, are for Mercado.

The main sense I am getting all over Makati is that there is a great number of long-term residents who believe that the 24-hour reign of the Binays must end on May 10. The Binays have reached the limit of tenacity in a person's terms.

—J. ARCENAL,
1122 Legaspi St.,
Makati City

Palace has power to set aside Agra resolution

IT IS NOT SURPRISING FOR JUSTICE SECRETary Alberto Agra, who is under Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, to deny the murder charges against two of the lieutenants for that grisly massacre in Maguindanao. The powerful political Ampatuan family played a major role in the cheating operations that characterized the 2004 presidential election where Arroyo's Dec. 8, got into town to many municipalities controlled by the Ampatuans. This despite the fact that 40% had poll watchers and supporters in the area. It is, isn't it, ironic that Agra served by Muslims because of the role he played in films as a muslim fighter and hero.

I admire the prosecutors handling the case for walking out in protest of the Agra's resolution. The prosecutors asserted that "the resolution will tilt the (non-)scales in long-drawn public that our criminal justice system is impotent when the accused are politically influential."

The Department of Justice is under the Executive. The department head, Secretary Agra, is a member of GMA's official family and, therefore, a technically one of her legal advisers. Following suit always reverses the decision of the DOJ.

—MARCIAL SOL,
bayan9847@yahoo.com

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Comelec to decide on parallel count soon

From page A1

many elements for it to work properly. It's not a simple matter of just saying we want to do this, and tomorrow it will be done," Comelec spokesperson Lizaan Jimenez said in a press briefing.

The multisectoral groups are proposing the nationwide manual count for the three contests before the results are electronically consolidated.

If the difference between the manual and the electronic results is less than 1 percent of the total number of ballots counted, the tally will be transmitted. But if the difference is 1 percent or more, then a full manual count of all ballots would be done.

Emerson Silvestre of the Bantay ng Bayan manual count would really the accuracy of the counting machines, pointing out that the previous count upheld some 99,000 machines are required to be 99 percent accurate, according to.

Stop worth taking

MBC chair Romeo Capulong became said the manual count would add credibility to the automated election.

"It is a step worth taking, because people will accept the results of the election more readily because of this added step, even if it takes one to three hours and some millions of pesos. It is a step worth taking because credibility is extremely important for this election," Dell Rosario said.

"There hence it's a small price to pay," he said, stressing that the groups were not against automation.

Jimenez said that the proposal had its good and bad sides.

"The good side is you have immediate verification, that after the machine counted is what you really put in ballots," he said.

"The bad side is what if manual count is not in with the machine results and damn there to be it an. Those can't be disproved easily ... you have to prove that it's wrong. In the meantime, your electronic count can't be used and you would have to go back to manual," Jimenez told reporters.

He also said a manual count could have ramifications on legal processes because there would have to be rules for precinct-level protests.

Election protests

The Comelec has limited the rules for election protest under the automated election system (AES), Jimenez said, adding that candidates cannot use election records and other election documents to try to stop the proclamation of winning candidates.

Proclamations can only be stopped if there is "illegal tampering," she said "illegal proceedings" in the Board of Canvassers.

Atty. Phil B., an academic expert on election that includes the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, civil society groups, computer professionals and computer science departments of top universities, said the Comelec's preparations had been "lopsided."

"The AES is not the design put in claimed by the Comelec and Smartmatic-TIM a spectacle of distrust. It also foreshadows low-tilted win-mentality," the group said in a report submitted.

'Prepare for the worst'

The group said a team that the system's results would not be accurate and credible, citing unprofessional over possible internal tipping and technical glitches.

AN AIR FORCE soldier guards the ballots at Cagayan de Oro City airport Monday from Manila intended for Lanao del Sur and ARMM. The ballots will be delivered to the respective municipalities.

AES Watch said that the Comelec's approval of various safeguards in the ballot made the balloting vulnerable. Suggestions to include digital signatures, voter verifiability and audit trailing and a comprehensive source code review were not heard, it said.

"We are now left with declaring to the public that Comelec has indeed failed the people," the group said. "We now call on the people to prepare for the worst, guard the vote and keep our vigilance high."

AES Watch said the Comelec should establish preparedness plan random manual audit, conduct a mock election in a random area, install poppers on the machines during election day, and implement a full manual check of all PCOS-read ballots.

Jimenez dismissed fears of a worst-case scenario.

'Bring sari-sari back'

"We prepare for the worst-being nice block. The lines will be long," Jimenez said in a press briefing.

"We are doing everything we can to help those things along. We not listening to suggestions. We're not listening to suggestions. That's the only way we [can] know what's wrong," he said.

Jimenez said that 1.5 percent of the 76,000 PCOS machines had been sent to various provinces as of yesterday morning.

On Sunday, ballot packs were dispatched to Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Tandag City, Surigao del Sur, Palawan and Bukidnon, the Comelec said.

AFP monitoring hub

Military authorities also announced yesterday that the Armed Forces of the Philippines would set up for the first time a center that would monitor the elections.

Equipped with high-tion TV monitors and computers, the AFP Data Center (AFPDC) in Camp Aguinaldo and Peacekeeping Operations Center (PKOC) would roll out its operations on April 30, when ballots would be received, said Col. Romulo Segovia.

"This hub was created because we want to show you that we are planning for the success of the election and a smooth transition of power for the new government," he said.

Some generals were implicated in alleged vote-padding in the 2004 presidential election, but Segovia said the "Hello Garci" tapes that allegedly suggested Mr. Arroyo stole the balloting, a charge she has denied. Which reports from Desalyn H. Ug, Amy Remo, Jill C. Gabrunagan in Manila, and Carla P. Gloria, Inquirer Mindanao.

109 years of Ortegas in La Union; Gordons, Magsaysays in Zambales

From page A1

civil governor in 1901.

Fifteen of them belonging to the third and fourth generations are now seeking reelection or vying for other posts.

"Continuous service, yes or no?," is how Mary Jane Ortega, former Sen. Fernando Ortega's sister and wife of reelectionist Representative Francisco Ortega, explains this bottleful.

"Unlike other politicians who leave the province when they lose and come back only when election season is coming, people may right here and see it every middle," she adds.

The Ortegas have stayed, winning many victories while suffering few defeats.

Another key to the family's political longevity, according to Mary Jane's brother-in-law, reelectionist Sen. Fernando Hoyos, is "[Ortega] marrying [Ortega] and Mary [married]."

"I mention close relationships in order to avoid intermarrying first, second, third and forthdays in the villages," Fabian says, "even when it's not necessary time."

Zambales: Personal folklore

In Zambales, the Magsaysays and the Gordons tie on size.

"The Gordons have been running Olongapo like a personal fiefdom," former Gov. Victoria Magsaysay said when he filed his certificate of candidacy for city mayor against the incumbent, James Gordon, Jr.

The Gordons have ruled Olongapo since the 1980s. Until now is the longest serving governor of the province and its former vice mayor, the district Rep. Hilarion Magsaysay.

Mayor Gordon's father, James, Sr., named Olongapo into a city, while his brother, Representative, presidential candidate Sen. Richard Gordon, wrested Subic Special Economic Zone.

The mayor's wife, Jane Marie, a challenging Hilarion in the congressional race, a post the latter won in 2004 against Olongapo Mayor Katherine Gordon, wife of Senator Gordon.

The Magsaysays and Gordons believe that dynasties aren't so ill-fated.

But a member of the Gordon clan, Ang Kapatiran Party standard bearer John Carlos "JC" de los Reyes, wants to do away rather all. "The time has been gone beyond to come. It's time we all abided by the Constitution without be our people," he said.

Pampanga: Arroyos plant roots

There runs no prominent dynasty in Pampanga until Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo became senator in 1992. She ended up as the wheelchair bound former President Diosdado Macapagal, had only one political heir—daughter Gloria, who was vice governor until 1998.

Immediately after the senate, three-star president, was installed as president in 2001, her son Mikey (Juan Miguel) won an easy governor. Mikey's local political foray was like planting seeds, for the actress-mayor got local, rooted and relocated in Pampanga.

Faced with lightweight foes, Mikey managed to team as re-mayor, district representative, governor, party list, finishing first, losing and forthdays in the villages." Publicists, "your whole It's not objective time."

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REP. VICTOR ORTEGA, Third generation

GOV. RAMON JR. ORTEGA, Third generation

FORMER REP. FRANCISCO ORTEGA, Second generation

Ilocos Sur: Turf of Singsons

At least 13 members of the Singson clan, led by Ilocos Governor Chavit, are seeking various posts in Ilocos Sur.

Chavit, a former governor, first lifted Ballesteros to the politicized race. Chavit's son, Rep. Ronald Singson, is seeking a second term against lawyer Sabino Ballesteros, while another son, Salvador Singson, is vice mayor-candidate in Vigan City.

Other aspiring Singsons are Antonino for board member, Councilor Singson-Gualberto for Caoayan mayor, Eric Singson-Bilog for Santa mayor, Ryan Singson for Santa Cruz mayor, Ria Singson-Zaragoza for Narvacan mayor, Allen for Candon City mayor, Alfonso and Rodolfo for Candon councilors, Chantal for Harrison, vice mayor, Zachel Zaragoza for Narvacan mayor and Christopher Servant for board member.

Ilocos Norte: Marcos vs Marcos

The Marcoses would not lose their hold on Ilocos Norte.

Senator Bongbong Marcos-Manotoc, a former governor, is seeking reelection as councilor, while grandson Carlos is ex-officio member of city council because he heads the Sangguniang Kabataan Federation of Dingras.

The mayor's nephew, Michael, is seeking his term as councilor, but his wife, Maydee Ys, is seeking a council seat.

Outgoing Rep. Ambos Celeste is contesting the mayoralty seat in Marcos-land. Gov. Imee Marcos-Manotoc's brother Bongbong, is running for governor.

The Ilocos matriarch, Imelda, is running for representative in the second district, while his son, outgoing Rep. Bernardo "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., is running for senator.

Pangasinan: Still big names

The big names are likely to be a mixed bag again come time in Pangasinan as retiring officials are replaced by wives, sons or daughters.

Rep. Mona Aglipay is trying to reclaim the governorship from actress Esplan Jr. Aglipay's father, Rep. Rodolfo Aglipay-Arcy, ruled the province from 1969-1986 and from 1992-1995. Arcy served as governor from 1998 to 2007.

Former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. has passed on the baton to his wife, Gina, who is running against Celso Lim, still of his erstwhile political opponent, former Sen. Gregorio Mayor Benjamin Lim.

De Venecia's son, Jose III is busy is seeking a Senate seat against Pia Cayetano and Manny Pillpino.

De Venecia's reign in the district began when he was elected representative during the first congressional election after the 1986 EDSA Revolt. He left his district in 1998 to run for the Senate. The seat of Venecia de Venecia, a cousin's wife, to succeed him. Termite lost to Lanao that election.

In 2001, De Venecia returned unopposed by convincing Lim to step for mayor in Dagupan. Lim's brother-in-law was running for mayor of Dagupan against reelectionist Mayor Alipio Fernandez Jr.

The Fernandezes have also dominated politics in Dagupan, starting with Fernandez's father, Alipio Sr., who was mayor.

Fernandez's son, Alipio Sor-alba or Bilbo, is seeking reelection as councilor, while grandson Carlos is ex-officio member of city council because he heads the Sangguniang Kabataan Federation of Dagupan

Assistant Editor Tony Hiergesia

Across the NATION

In Abra, no political rallies but tension

BANGUED, ABRA—NO big campaign rallies had been held here due to the tension following recent cases of political harassment and threats, Gov. Eustaquio Bersamin said.

"Right now, there was no campaign rally held here. No one wanted to attend. It's all house-to-house campaigning," Bersamin told the Inquirer on Friday.

The police and the Commission on Elections, however, have yet to put Abra under their control as no political killing and serious armed threat had been recorded in the province during the election period.

Senior Supt. Elmer Soria, Task Force Abra commander, said pairing the whole province under Comelec control would be undermining the police's efforts to keep election-related violence.

Serious armed threat

"One of the conditions of Comelec control is that there should be serious armed threat," said Soria.

Mayors Roberto Valdeiglesias of Tayo and Dominic Gallegos of Bangued, through lawyer Emilio Cordero, have asked the police to put the two towns or the whole province under Comelec control, citing supposed threats from armed groups who are out to disrupt the elections. Dolor officials have yet to reply to the mayors' appeals.

"Whoever runs gets the votes of known elections. I'm for him. If Comelec control is the answer, I'm for it," said Bersamin.

Soria said if an area is put under Comelec control, a special unit from headed by a Comelec official will be created. The Comelec director said the highest-ranking officer of the military and the police in the area would supervise and control the administrative activities of local government and enforce voter compliance with election laws and prohibitions.

He said the task force can also redeploy or add government troops in the area.

Bersamin earlier called on the police to be "thorough and impartial" in handling the recent cases of political attacks and harassment.

Gun attack

On April 11, a convoy of Bangued mayoral candidate Ryan Luna was attacked by armed men in Pedro Gelacio town, barring four wounded. Luna, son of reelectionist Rep. Cecilia Luna, was rushed to her base of his campaign once wounded.

Earlier, police received complaints about armed men roaming Bangued to drive residents to vote for a candidate of a prominent political family in the province.

On April 3, a mine of a candidate for representative in Abra exploded but no Abra official poked a gun at her in Bangued.

Ryan Luna, who is facing Valera in the mayoral race in Bangued, said he has no objections to proposals to put the capital town under Comelec control.

In Benguet, Chief Supt. Wilfredo Cayat, Cordillera police director, insisted that the police would intensify its presence to ensure peaceful and orderly elections in the region.

Bersamin has said he has ordered continuous checkpoint operations and police visibility to prevent election-related violence.

He said the Cordillera police, as of April 23, had seized 61 firearms, most of which came from Abra, Benguet and Baguio City.

Bersamin said the police have the likelihood peace secessionist movement to declare a dictatorship in violent clashes.

The Cordillera police have installed 20 towns in its election watch list. Among the towns that the police are watching due to serious political rivalries are Bangued, Boliney, Dolores, Lagangilang, Tayo, Villaviciosa and Lagayan in Abra; Tabuk and Pinukpuk in Kalinga; and Pasuquin and Sarrat in Ilocos Norte.

DARING DIVERS

Children enjoy their summer vacation diving from a unique rock formation on the Bayang River in Yuan town in Cagayan province.

Automation can't stop vote buy, says exec

CAMARINES SUR—While automation would simplify the elections this year, a Commissioner on Elections (Comelec) official in Naga City said.

Election inspectors (BEI) are attending reorientation seminars to familiarize them with their functions and the process. Security concerns have also been addressed, he said.

Comelec said he has been receiving complaints about vote buying—candidates supposedly giving rice, noodles and canned goods—but no one has filed a formal complaint and submitted evidence.

"We need written complaints and hard evidence in order for us to [punish] the guilty parties," he said.

Complaints, he said, should be filed directly with the Comelec law department or the provincial prosecutor's office.

In an election meeting held in Baguio City last week, Clifford Sorita, Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) secretary general, said the PCCRV executive is just a relay and the persons who violate it is responsible to us-

ing serious words.

"The election has nothing to do with business but we cannot condone vote buying and flying voters. These are the things that we should try to stop," he said.

Sorita said while the Comelec and the PPCRV have computerized voters' lists that can verify voter data, the best way to stop vote buying is still appealing to voters not to sell their votes.

"Keeping the elections clean largely depends on voters," he said.

Lawyer Modesto Bilbal, Baguio election officer, said the Comelec had conducted several forums to educate voters on automation but only a few people attended these activities.

On April 19, the PPCRV and the Baguio-Benguet Market Vicos Cooperative Multipurpose (Banpromed) held a PCOS machine demonstration at the Baguio public market to reach more voters.

"We want to get more people involved. Since Baguio is a limited electorate, teachers and have an idea of the actual process where they return to their towns and clans," said Joseph Cacal, Banpromed manager.

Teacher Aurora Balbin, who participated in the April 19 mock elections, said the process was easy but she learned that elderly voters may find it difficult, citing the small text in the ballot and unfamiliarity with the machine. Another Baguio inquirer Central Junior, and Rhonnalyn Agorilla and Jean Danican, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Shellfish alert raised in Pangasinan town

By Yolanda Sevalo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—THE BUREAU of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has asked scientists to stop buying and eating shellfish harvested from the Agno River in their town, after tests showed that these were positive for harmful microorganisms.

Hector Bravenboer, the regional director of the BFAR, said the river water did not show discoloration normally associated with red tide but their tests showed there was increased algal bloom in the area.

A BFAR advisory, issued on April 22, warned against the gathering or harvesting, transporting and marketing shellfish, shrimp, crabs and oysters from the area until the river's toxicity level goes down below the allowable limit.

Bravenboer said oyster meat samples collected from the area were found positive for the paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) toxin, which can cause death when contaminated shellfish are consumed in large quantities.

"The toxin is dissolves when the shellfish meat is consumed without other food, in large quantity and when prepared with vinegar," he said.

Early symptoms include numbness of lips and parts of the face, chest pains and difficulty in breathing.

Bani Mayor Marcelo Navarro said he had instructed the village head of Wawa to guard the river and discourage people from gathering shellfish there.

"People there already are aware that shellfish may cause poisoning," he said.

He also instructed market inspectors not to allow entry of shellfish in the public market. He said the Wawa River had been cleared of fishery structures and traps but its source could still be contaminated by pollution from swimming farms.

The Wawa is where five rivers—Lardizi, Bani, Eastern, Alaminos and Bani—converge before draining into the sea through the Religion on Channel to Bolinao and Anda towns.

"Never consume drinks contaminated because of the fish cages in Sto. Religion on Channel. The water is stocked and becomes stagnant, causing the increase of nutrients," Navarro said.

Domondon said shellfishfarms, the environmentists that produce the PSP toxin, are available in large bodies of water and multiply rapidly when environmental conditions become favorable.

"Maybe the long dry spell that was followed by heavy rains in the area last month caused the rapid multiplication of the shellfishes," he said.

"Shellfish are filter feeders and they eat microorganisms, which are deposited in their stomachs. These are part of their natural food so they are not poisoned," Domondon said.

The BFAR regularly monitors the shrimp and sea waters of Bolinao, Anda and Alaminos City, but latest reports revealed these were negative for PSP toxin.

Governor unhurt in bomb blast

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
Inquirer Mindanao

CEBU CITY—Surigao's redistrictable Governor Sol Matugas survived a bomb attack while he and his followers were crossing a bridge in Bislig, Surigao del Sur, on his way to attend a rally of Lakas-Kampi-CMD presidential candidate Gilbert Teodoro on Monday.

No one was hurt, police said.

The bomb, placed in a parked red motorcycle, exploded while Dumlao's convoy was negotiating the Lee-Manila Bridge.

Supt. Henry Dias, deputy provincial police chief, said ordnance experts were still investigating the type of explosive used and the identity of the perpetrators.

But midnight of Sunday, a convoy of Mayor Enrique Yap Jr. of Claver in Surigao del Norte was ambushed by unidentified armed men in a remote village of Macajas, Bonifacio said.

Although no casualties were reported, police arrested a supporter of another politician shortly after the attack, he said.

The governor said an 1,000-man hellroad to have been used in the ambush was intercepted by police.

Ozamiz City bet decries harassment

OZAMIZ CITY—A MAYORAL candidate has called on the Commission on Election (Comelec) to place the city under control, saying her supporters were being harassed by members of a rival party.

Councilor Constancia Uy, who is running for mayor under the Liberal Party, said at least 14 of her community leaders have been harassed by Lakas-Kampi-CMD men.

"It is of utmost importance that Ozamiz City be considered a hot spot and placed under Comelec control," Uy said.

Major Rodolfo Dalagdag, who is running for congressman, at least under the Lakas-Kampi-CMD, has denied allegations that local party members were harassing Uy's supporters.

Dalagdag also said he was supporting the city council's resolution asking the Comelec and the Interior and Local Government to deploy more forces in the city.

Dalagdag's daughter, Nova Princes Dalagdag Echavez, is running to replace her father.

Uy, however, questioned the council resolution, saying it was deliberated and that she could not remember it being part of the agenda. Tina Pial, Inquirer Mindanao

Court returns Boracay lot to Aussie resort operator

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ROXAS CITY—AN AKLAN court has ordered the return of a disputed property on Boracay Island to an Australian resort operator and his wife.

Judge Elmo del Rosario of the Malay Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 5 ruled that the 6,000-square meter property occupied by Boracay Sunsplash Beach Resort should be immediately restored to Evangeline Dalisay and Edwin Canedo.

Melvin and turned over to Australian Greg Hutchinson and his Filipino wife Verona Brown.

In an order released on March 30, and received by the parties on April 23, the court reversed part of the Feb. 2009 decision of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court (MCTC) of Buruanga-Malay, which denied the issuance of a writ of preliminary injunction against Dalisay, who is currently occupying the property.

Del Rosario also ordered Dalisay and Mervin to pay the Hutchinsons P2.985 million in damages covering rental for the occupation of the property in Barangay Balabag at the northern end of the island, and lawyer's fees.

In reversing the MCTC ruling, del Rosario said the Hutchinsons were in possession of the property when Dalisay and Mervin forcibly entered and took control of the property on Nov. 5, 2008. He said Dalisay also failed to prove that she has been in possession of the property since Oct. 17, 2006.

Del Rosario cited government permits, clearances and receipts presented by the Hutchinsons, which showed that the couple was in possession of the property before the 2008 takeover.

Armed security guards hired by Mervin, the lot owner, and Dalisay, former subowner of the Sunsplash, had taken over the property claiming legal control over it and became Hutchinson allegedly refused to leave the resort despite the termination of the lease agreement with Mervin.

Mervin is fighting for control over the property, saying that she had terminated the original lease contract with Hutchinson, including a 10-year extension until December 9, 2019, for alleged violations, among the cited violations were the failure of the Hutchinsons to secure the conformity of her estranged husband, Clarin Mervin, to the extended contract.

But the Hutchinsons disputed the cancellation of the lease agreement and, in fact, have a pending case before the RTC.

The Hutchinsons had terminated the contract with subleasee Dalisay and her partners in February 2008 for contract violations. But Dalisay has accused the Hutchinsons of illegally ejecting her from her leased property.

Dalisay took control of the property, while Mervin occupied the ground floor of the Hutchinsons' adjacent apartments.

The Hutchinsons and their 5-year-old twin children had been locked up on the third floor of the apartments for three months during the occupation. They have been staying in a rented island for the past two months, according to Verona.

In its Feb. 5 ruling, the MCTC ordered Mervin to vacate the ground floor of the apartment but upheld Dalisay's possession of the resort property.

The disputed lots remain under the Boracay Special Tourist Police Office to maintain order and prevent violence.

Electronics firm in Cavite zone to lay off 450 workers

By Marlowe Cinco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAN PEDRO, LAGUNA—SOME 450 workers in a Chinese-owned electronics company in Cavite were caught by surprise when management on Monday handed them their walking papers.

The workers of Dyna Image Corp. Philippines at the Cavite Economic Zone in Rosario were told the termination effectivity would take effect on May 18.

"They were forcing us to sign the checks for their separation pay," said Virginia Mores, president of the Samahan ng Manggagawa at Dyna Image Corp. Philippines Independent Union, in a phone interview with their bosses. The union has 229 members.

The bosses tried to reach the company officials, but no one was available for an interview because they were attending meetings.

Last week, the union filed a petition for a preventive mediation case, illegal suspension and harassment at the National Conciliation and Mediation Board in Imus town in Cavite. The first hearing was set for Tuesday.

"We were surprised this morning. They [management] probably had heard about the hearing tomorrow that's why they called for us today," said Mores.

The company, which manufactures parts of cell phones and cameras, is cutting its 900-strong workforce by half due to financial losses.

"But the DOLE [Department of Labor and Employment] has advised management that if they are facing losses, they should first try cutting down overtime shifts and only as last resort before finally resorting to retrenchment," said Dennis Sequerra of the labor party list Partido ng Manggagawa in Cavite.

"In the case of Dyna, the workers would still go to overtime shifts until recently," he said.

Labor regional director Rosalinda Montano said the commission was not aware of illegal dismissal.

"Orders from their mother companies were really pulled out. They [company] had no choice but to lay off some of their workers," Montano said.

He said the company had agreed to pay the workers for the remaining days of service until May 10, among other benefits.

Montes said the company had offered them 13 days per year of service as separation pay.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ ZAMBOANGA CITY

Kidnapped Jew businesswoman

A BUSINESSWOMAN who was abducted in Zamboanga Sibugay was rescued by her captors in Lanao del Norte on Sunday night.

Nena Tecsimalay, 62, a dealer of seaweed products, was forced by her abductors in Dalion Bago Gregorio town and was undergoing medical treatment in a hospital in Zamboanga City, Col. Rolando Bautista, commander of the army's 102nd Brigade based in Ipil said here in Zamboanga Sibugay, said.

Bautista said he could still not say who was behind the nonbailable abduction in Malubog town on April 12, as ransom was paid. Earlier, Senior Supt. Federico Castro, Zamboanga Sibugay police chief, said "Yoggi" members of the Moro rebel Liberation Front were behind the kidnapping.
John E. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

■ CEBU CITY

2 workers hurt in construction

TWO MEN (SIC) were injured when the four-storey flooring of a call center building under construction at the Asiatown IT Park in Barangay Lahug collapsed on Saturday.

Jonathan Jumillano and Billy Adelantado were working at the Aegis Philippines Support Corporation building when the flooring they were standing on fell shortly before 4 p.m., the project manager, Roger Abella, said.

Construction work has been suspended pending results of the investigation into possible safety lapses at the site.
Cliff E. Arquiza and Jhaztine Bonjoc, Inquirer Visayas

Mayor's brother eludes drug raiders

P50,000 SHOOTOUT P200,000 worth of suspected methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu) was recovered in warrantys buy-bust operation in Caraga City on Thursday against a brother of Caraga Mayor Yolando Bananan.

The suspect, Apollo Bananan, evaded arrest but members of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Group Special Operations Task Force seized eight packs of suspected shabu in front of a pawnshop house in Barangay Poblacion.

Apollo's companion, Jocelyn Palomo, was arrested.

Mayor Bananan, who is now running for vice mayor, said he had warned his brother to stop selling drugs and that he had reported his activity to the police.
Chito D. Aragon, Inquirer Visayas

555 gets P1.4M from delinquents

THE SOCIAL Security System (SSS) has collected P1.8 million from 63 delinquent employers who have availed themselves of the agency's condonation programs.

They were among the 300 delinquent employers who were given grace until July 31 to avail themselves of the program and pay the outstanding contributions of their employees, Ulmeda Panaligan, SSS city branch assistant manager, said.

"We are appealing to the remaining delinquent employers to pay their obligation or else criminal charges of violation of Republic Act No. 8282 or the Social Security Act of 1997 will be filed against them," Panaligan said.
Jhaztine Bonjoc, Inquirer Visayas

■ CAMARINES SUR

Landmines found after encounter

THREE landmines were recovered after an encounter between New soldiers and communist rebels in Sitio Pinagtalisayan in Tinambac, the military said.

No casualties resulted but in the clash between soldiers from the 31 Ut Vladimir Bala and about 30 New People's Army (NPA) members in Barangay Sta. Magsaysay about 7:30 a.m., said Maj. Ryan Cabanos, Army regional spokesperson.

Landmines have been used extensively by the NPA in its attacks on government forces.
Jonas Calvin Cortes, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Poor teens tutor poor kids as summer job

By Tonnee Dreza
Inquirer Central Luzon

MINALIN, PAMPANGA—WITH the help of former freqiliner, 18-year-old Christian Cruz worked through a series of addition exercises in a mental arithmetic contest locked in finger-by-finger counting.

Cruz, including Aiko Montiza, have three children each under their care, pledging from the tough Dec number problems.

Not too far away in Barangay San Pedro where Lourdes Tinio got second choice children at her parental home. Two parents had pleaded such her to take in their children. She agreed.

Pangilinan, 19, Monday, 17, and Raquel, 18, belonged to the first batch of 613 students who are "revolutionizing" the Special Program for the Employment of Students (SPES) that lured several students to work in the tough Republic Act No. 7323 during summer or Christmas breaks.

The provincial government calls it "Balitaan ko. Yaw ko (Hearing my village mayor)."

The concept of employing poor students to teach young and poor their learners is "unique and could be the first in Central Luzon," said Lourdes Tinio, head of the Pampanga's public employment service office (Peso).

Earning their tuition

"We have employed a student approach where the learning session their tuition and the children are taught to read, write and do math making education accessible to both, this will have long term impact on the human resources of the province."

Previous SPES programs hired students for office work and surveys that validated data on needs or services. Launched on April 11, the project is done in all the 20 towns of Pampanga.

"With every teen handling three children each, almost 2,000 children are being aided before classes open in June. That's a lot to note for 20 days, sir! hour a day.

Each teen earns P279.10 a day or P5,500 a month. At least 60 percent of that amount comes from the provincial government. The 40 percent is paid by the Department of Labor and Employment.

The Alternative Learning System of the Department of Education prepared the Math, Science and English modules, while the Pampanga Educational Inquiry runs to screen those qualified to tutor, the DepEd oriented them on the job.

The Peso offices in various towns helped in screening the applicants for the summer job program, while the Ambalanan of San Fernando's Social Action Center of Pampanga (Sacop) helps the provincial bus monitor the progress.

"You have maximum benefits and partnership [among agencies] is forged," Ms. Tinio Pandilla said.

TEENAGE students save their tuition money under the Special Program for Employment of Students at the provincial government in Pampanga.

Programs on education and health are done together, he said. For instance, a 45-day supplemental feeding and nutrition advocacy program is school-based and parents-managed.

Education + health

A P30.3-million fund support at least 17,267 undernourished children, a report from Benilda Bartia, provincial nutrition action officer, said.

In November 2009, the Department of Health cited the provincial government as the Gawad sa Kalusugan Bantoan (translation in Central Luzon, ranking for a P50,000 worth of medicines and P100,000 at the national level, said Teresita Cunanan, Pampanga's nutrition dietician.

Monday said she "feels good" helping poor students like her.

"There's a double purpose in what we do. I help my parents earn my tuition and I also help children learn. This job is great," she said.

DAR affirms farmers' rights in SCTEx feud

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Department of Agrarian Reform in Central Luzon upheld the right of 82 farmers over a disputed 364-hectare land that covered part of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx) in Pampanga.

The ruling, which dragged for 13 years, ended in Tuesday last week, DAR regional director Amado Inciong said.

Inciong ordered the landowner's application to exempt the land from the coverage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

Inciong's order was consistent with another order he issued in September 2006.

In the order dated April 15, Inciong directed the municipal agrarian reform officer (Mao) and the provincial committee to process the re-documentation of the claim folder, which will pave the way for the issuance of titles to the tenants on the farm property to Pampanga Bay Area Area to Pkonblations, Pampanga.

The same officers were instructed to delineate 5-10 ha in the property for the SCTEx.

The state-owned Subic Government Development Authority (SBMA) paid P70 for every square meter of land, declared to that portion of the 364-km highway tenants said.

In 2007, the SBMA reported buying 1,877 lots to provide 60 meters of land to every part of the highway. It also filed more than 200 expropriation cases, the status of which is unknown.

The toll road links the Subic Bay Freeport (Submarine), Clark Freeport (Pampanga) and Colinas Industrial Park (Tarlac).

Ramon Jesario Jr., one of the landowners' heirs, declined to comment, saying he had yet to receive a copy of the order.

A PORTION of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx)

Jaime Soto, president of the San Jose Farmers Association, asked the DAR to install them immediately to the property.

In an investigative report, Abel Santos, Thanksgiving Mayo, said Jesus disavowed the farmers' crops in October 2009 and ejected them the following month.

Jesario had argued that half of the tenants were "fictitious" and that the transfer of ownership from his parents to the tenants was done through fraud and misrepresentation.

Through their representative, Eva, Alma Tadeo of Paraiso Filipinas, the farmers said the elder Jesario abandoned the property in 1971 due to insurgency in the area.

Village chief Alfredo Hizon confirmed that farmers have been in actual possession of the area since 1974. He said the land was used for agriculture.

Farmers said Jesus appeared when the SCTEx began negotiating for the purchase of right-of-way for the SCTEx in 1997. He asked for higher compensation, they said. Tonnee Dreza, Inquirer Central Luzon

Rebs disrupt caucus of Capiz bets

ROXAS CITY—FIFTEEN ARMED men believed to be members of the New People's Army (NPA) disrupted a political caucus of the Liberal Party (LP) in a village in Maraboon town in Capiz last week.

Related reports reaching the provincial police said an armed man went up the stage of the barangay hall in Cabu-agan, grabbed the microphone from the emcee and announced that the caucus would not be allowed because the candidates failed to pay for a permit to campaign.

The intruders, who did not have any police escort, and the villagers were allowed to leave unharmed by the rebels an hour later.

Earlier, Roxas Sam Jonathan Angan, provincial police director, confirmed that the rebels had started sending extortion letters to candidates after the filing of certificates of candidacy in December last year. Felipe Celino, Inquirer Visayas

Finally, a 'pigar-pigar' festival

DAGUHOY CITY—"PIGAR-PIGAR"! The deep-fried, multi-thin slices of combed meat that have put this city on the map of gastronomy delights, are finally set to be the main attraction of a mini-festival by the club that bears included in the ongoing Bangus Festival.

Held on April 19, the Pigar-pigar Festival kicked off with a contest on the best tasting and most presentable recipe.

Judges picked the entries of Bhavenuvi Barrey, By Jane's and Mhel's for the top prizes.

"The winners are all loyal to the basic recipe—the thin slices of beef are deep-fried and flavored with salt and pepper and garnished with vegetables. But still, some are tastier than others and some are better presented than others," said Leah Aquino, head of the city tourism office, which supervised the judging.

The contestants were given 90 minutes to prepare, cook and serve their dish to the judges. Just before the judges and the audience.

But there was more to the festival than the cooking and the eating.

Ty-Ann's Dilation-Blue and Decline's cook up prizes for best decorated stalls and for their activity in displaying the dish.

The main festival was chaired by Committee Chair Samson, who, along with the late business correspondent, Manny Bautista, announced the pigar-pigar dish.

Carried had given instructions to a woman named "Ating," who occupied a stall on Dalton Street, near the public market, to cook the Bendoy hardened beef bought from a meat dealer named Andong Cervante, sometime in the 1980s, Samson said.

"We just put the thick (meat in cuts the best) and

A DISH is cut recipes of local beef dish "pigar-pigar" along Kalsan Terrace in Dagupan City.

the rest," he said.

Samson said the pigar-pigar today lacks one ingredient: the seasoned tripe made from undigested grass inside an animal's stomach. It is called pigar (three) and it serves as the thicker the pigar-pigar," he said. Nabenuk Bendoy, Inquirer Northern Luzon

HOMETOWN
Snapshot

Editor Teddyboy S. Molavedra
Associate Editor Francis T. J. Dehesa

SPORTS

So settles for draw, stays on top

GM Wesley So (right) needs three straight draws to secure a World Cup ticket. AFP/FIDE

By Ray Gutierrez

SUBIC—FILIPINO GRANDMASTER WESLEY SO SETTLED FOR A DRAW with GM Neelmeyam Gopal Gorthu of India in the top board yesterday but remained the only leader in the 9th Asian Individual Chess Championship at the Subic Bay Exhibition and Convention Center.

Unable to find a winning line with black, the 16-year-old So agreed to split the point with Gorthu after 32 moves of a Sicilian Najdorf variation.

After six rounds, So stayed at the helm of the 49-strong Open division with 5.5 points, boosting his chances for one of the five slots available for the 2011 World Chess Cup.

Tied At second with 4.5 points were Gorthu, Mongolian Enkemaa Gantsogt-duruu and Chinese GM-Si Wan and Fu Hengyu, who won over Thai bested Lee Jeromy. The outfitted Gandroon stunned Chinese GM Zhou Jianqi.

So, the country's top player with an Elo rating of 2665, needs only to draw his last three games to earn his second straight World Cup ticket. He needs at least two victories to secure the title and the $6,000 first prize outright.

"I'll play my game and see what happens," said So, who is skipping college this school year to concentrate on chess aside can break into the elite 2700 club.

With the positive section, So first offered the draw in the 30th move, which Gopal, sixth player in the 2009 edition held in Manchar City declined.

Two moves later, it was Gopal's turn to make a move and So refused.

Still battling at powerline were GM stars 18th Ding Liren and 16-line, who both rose 0.5 points.

Top seed GM Le Quang Liem beat compatriot GM Tu Hoang Thong and rallied to 4.0 in the company of GM John Paul Gomez and Indian GM Krishnan Sasikiran, who drew their match, as well as Vietnamese IM Nguyen Thai Son, who bested GM Zaw Win Naing.

Also with 4.0 points is GM Rahul Srivastava, who bested GM Tania Rahman, and Indonesian GM Susanto Megaranto and Iranian Pole Master Ashgan Golmohdi, who figured in another draw.

Filipino GM Rogelio Antonio Jr., a 12-time national champion, could only draw with certified Chinese Wang Li and with 3.5 points needs to sweep his last three games to earn a berth in the World Cup slated in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia.

In the women's division, Iranian PGM Atousa Pourkashiyan, crowned champion with 5.5 points to edge Chinese WIM Dong Chun for sole 5.0 points and share the lead with Chinese IM Song Yi Qi, who was held to a draw by Vietnamese WGM Hoang Thi Bao Trang.

The nine-round tournament is organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines headed by Prospero "Bomb" Pichay with support from the Cebu Pacific Philippine Authority, Department of Tourism, Digitel, PCSO and the Philippine Sports Commission.

Rebel swim bloc slams Peping's Pasa stand

By Jun Navarro

A GROUP OF SWIMMERS AND THEIR mentors blasted Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. for allowing the Philippine Aquatic Sports Association (Pasa) to hold its election despite what it claimed were strong objections from the swimming community.

Manila Antiga Mendoza, president of the group known as Aquatic Sports Association of the Philippines (Aspa), said the electioneering in Cebu last Saturday violated a compromise agreement forged by the local Olympic body between Pasa president Mark Joseph and former Pasa head Chito Reguro in February 2008.

The agreement, designed to end the leadership dispute, called for Joseph to hold re-elections for the association's regional directors and to complete the composition of the Pasa board, which is mandated to oversee the president.

Mendoza said Joseph never called the elections and stayed on as Pasa head.

She also said that on June 17, 2008, the POC executive board acknowledged that Joseph's unilateral actions in the name of the agreement but decided to defer action until after the Beijing Olympics. The POC board set another meeting on June 2, 2008.

"But no such meeting took place after the Olympics, and representatives of Reguro's Campaign for Asian and the petitioning party, the Swim Fans Movement, were ignored," added Mendoza.

She said Aspa acted to reopen the case with the Olympic body but POC secretary general Steve Hontiveros told the group on March 16 that the matter was officially closed.

Mendoza said Joseph cannot invoke the section of Pasa by-laws, which removed the right of regional directors to elect the president and other executive officers.

"Their election has been validly governed by its own by-laws," said Mendoza, stressing that any amendment of the old by-laws needs a two-thirds vote of the board of directors.

PSC incentive for Hall of Fame awardees

By Cedrill P. Tapao

THE NINE SPORTS HEROES AND MEMBERS OF THE 1994 national quintet who will be enshrined in the first Philippine Sports Hall of Fame on May 5 will receive incentives from the Philippine Sports Commission.

This was disclosed yesterday by PSC chair Harry Angeling, the vice chairman of the Hall of Fame organizing committee, who said each awardee will be given P500,000.

The duties of some of the awardees who passed away may receive the incentive via their kin hold, added Angeling, who took the initiative of finally pushing through with the Hall of Fame project.

Republic Act No. 9757, which created the Philippine Sports Hall of Fame, was actually approved in November 1, 2009, but the project never took off until last year.

Chief Justice Reynato Puno (see box) was invited to keynote the induction into ceremony Cat the Shangrila Mall of the Manila Bowl.

Boxing greats Gabriel "Flash" Elorde, Francisco "Francisco Villa" Guilledo and Cebuano Gaston Glen Ronnie Monteseros.

Olympians Teofilo Galvezona, Simeon Toribio, Miguel Walsh Jose "Tata" Villanueva and track-and-field Villanueva, basketball player Coby Lastimosa and the 1994 national basketball team that hauled a bronze medal in the world championship (see photo for awardees).

"I think we have come up with the best batch; there are still many deserving," Angeling said. "It's about time we pay them back long after they fought for flag and country."

The PSC chair said he will push for the Hall of Fame induction to be held once every two years.

Among those who are playing major roles in the project are organizing committee head Art Misa (a guard of the Philippine Olympians Association), Angel Sipin, president of the Philippine Olympic Committee, Antonio "Boogie" Lopez Boy, Ralph Shahbazi, who was one of the proponents of the law and Tagaytay Mayor Bambol Tolentino.

Hot-scoring juniors now with Tams, Maroons

By Jacinto N. Paya

TWO PROLIFIC HIGH school scorers will be suiting up for joined rookies acting teams in the UNAF men's basketball tournament next season.

Joshua Steel, who shattered the NCAA juniors record by filing a phenomenal 89 points for a San Beda University last year, has joined University of the Philippines while Terrence Romeo has been elevated by the Far Eastern Tamaraws.

In that last year as a Baby Tamaraw, Romeo broke the 33-year-old record of 69 by UPIS Paolo Mendoza by firing 93 points while playing for only 33 minutes.

Both have yet to hit their stride with their new teams after the ongoing PBCM Flying V Thirdsey First Pro-Pro Season in Bulacan City.

But EU coach Aboy Castro and FEU mentor Olsen Racela feel it is only a matter of time before their new recruits display their famed shooting touch.

"We all know that he's a special type of player," said Castro of Steel. "He's a tough kid and he knows what to do out there in the court."

He said the player "is his first guard with us." Tamaraws coach Olsen Racela said of Romeo, a 6-foot-0 guard.

"But we know he has the talent, so we want him to gain more confidence this pro season."

Romeo, a sturdy 5-11 point guard, contended 42 points from the three-point area in achieving the record, which he outclassed with 11 rebounds, 12 assists and 12 steals.

He debuted with only eight points when the Maroons routed both the La Salle Green archers, 69-51, early last week.

Romeo fared even hardly getting only five points when the Tamaraws bowed to the University of the East Warriors, 70-72, last Saturday.

The two will be matched next when the two-team and the Tamaraws resume their PBCM campaign.

San Andres caps sweep

KENNETH San Andres takes a victory ride with the finisher's checkered flag.

San Andres receives the perpetual trophy from Valenzuela Mayor Jayen Baquero.

FORTIFIED BY AN ADVANtage throw, Kenneth San Andres completed a sure victory double in the 18 Dodo inter-barangay Motocross Championship Sunday in Valenzuela, Antipas.

Riding with choice position, the 19-year-old San Andres sustained his blistering pace in the second race to finish off the Brave challenge of Bingolbon Bulahoffel Balibidog in the two-day competition.

Balibidog, who was looking to defend his crucial lead in the Asian Motocross series despite an injured knee sustained in practice two weeks ago, gave San Andres all that he could handle in this duel in the newly built 1.6-km circuit.

But San Andres, underscoring his mastery of the hilltop track, started as a 10-meter win in finish with 30 points.

"It's difficult at beating Bimbalibidol," said San Andres, who also topped the Pro-Open race to consolidate his lead in the national standings and extend the stab in the Asian circuit.

"But I gave it my best and my hard work paid off. Balibidog raced with a slight disadvantage but he still put up a tough fight."

Balibidog said his injury problem inflicted him, especially in jumps that required hard landing.

"Yes, it hurts. But I had to race and give him a good fight," said the Mongolian ace, whose shot here was supported by the National Motor Sports and Safety Association headed by Micky Ciampet.

Balibidog hailed the efforts of Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office director Ray Maquiso and his aide, Valenzuela Mayor Jayen, who staged what he said was one of the best-organized races in the country.

"People here in Valenzuela will remember this for a long time," Maquiso said. "But Bingolbon is up with more and, hopefully, we can provide the inspiration for our young kids to get into racing such as this."

Maquiso's son, 10, also grabbed a piece of the limelight when he topped a special race, while Ben Commander topped three races—the Open and Local Graduate and Novice Open.

In other races, Dennis Arriol ruled the Underdoge category; Jennifer Mateo topped the junior 85cc event, Migi Tolentino captured the intermediate title and Bonto Bulia triumphed in the junior 50cc race.

The other events saw San Andres' father, Jun San rolling the veterans race, John Fernandez emerging overall in champion and Omar Arizon topping the beginners Performance class.

George Lizares, Contributor

Tagaytay ladies best Orchard

CHARISSA ATTENDANTS 8 (Ella Cruz, Cruz, Pontes, Tagaytay 72, Andrew 71, Southwoods 7, Dy Macel 8) def. Orchard 1

TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDERS (Dymaculangan) defeated Orchard by winning at home and then salvaging a draw in the away game recently to forge a share of the lead with the Imagen in the Ladies Pedestrian League matches in various venues.

After pulling off a 5-1 victory at its home course, Highlands rolled on a big win by Shelley Ann Ayla Whelan in the greenskeeper to finish a 2.5 draw at Orchard and pull even with Alabang at 13 points heading into the last two playing days of the elimination.

Alabang lost its duel with Alta Elena after a draw in four and a 1.5-2.5 road defeat.

Highlands and Alabang, however, are still tied second of semifinal slots as they lead Manila Southwoods by two points and Alta Elena by five. Highlands and Alabang square off for the top seeding in the next two rounds in what could also be a preview of the championship.

The loss pushed Orchard on the brink of elimination. The Game squad only has 4 points in eight games and needs to sweep its seven with Fortuna to salvage the fourth and last semifinal ticket.

Fortuna, however, is fighting for the semi and actually carries a better chance than Orchard.

In fifth place with 6 points, Fortuna still has its Alta Elena, which has a tough last round encounter in Southwoods, for the fourth spot.

Undoy, DL Peña shine

ATAN DELETES MAS KIMS while Undoy outclassed three former national champions to capture the men's motor event in the Sunday Thirty Heart Masters and Executive Race at Clearwater in the Ayala Alabang Village in Muntinlupa.

Undoy, a 40-year-old member of the Army Support Command, negotiated the 10K course in 37 minutes and two seconds to beat some 200 racers, including Rey Antiquez, Jimmy Bing and Edgardo Rodriguez.

Dominador Dela Peña demonstrated the veterans' race in 52:51, over three minutes ahead of his closest pursuers.

"I didn't expect to win," Undoy also said in Filipino.

Alexandria Pineda, 31, outclassed her rivals with a time of 50:07 in the race that featured former marathon kings. He was followed by Susan Mayuga (39:41). Rodolfo Teodoro (40:21) and Rodrigo Lim (42:46) and Rodrigo Gang (43:36) ruled the 35-to-39-year division. Antonio H. Paya

SHAKEY'S V-LEAGUE

Ateneo, Lyceum clash for top spot

By Cedelf P. Tupas

ATENEO AND LYCEUM SLUG IT OUT FOR the top spot in Group B today even as University of Santo Tomas tries to bounce back from its first loss in the Shakey's V-League Season 7 First Conference at the FilOil Flying V Arena in San Juan.

Tied on top of Group B with identical 2-0 records, the Lady Eagles and Lady Pirates clash at 4 p.m. in a duel of teams bowled up by three-Thai imports.

The Tigresses, humbled by the San Sebastian Lady Stags, take on the dangerous La Salle Lady Spikers at 2 p.m.

Ateneo will rely on Bruninhaldi Soraya, who registered with 17 points in their straight-set victory over University of San Jose-Recoletos last Sunday.

She will be ranged against Lyceum's Thai reinforcement Pornpin Intorong, who has averaged 15 points in her first two games.

Soraya's solid play seems to rub off on her teammates with Jessica Dela Pena, Joy Cases and Nina Gallovan flashing improved performances.

With Soraya blending well with her teammates, coach Clint Mahusay managed to use all of his 11 players in the game against USJ-R.

La Salle showed its strength in the straight-set win over the Eastern University. The Lady Spikers also proved to be a dangerous foe for defenders Ima Sebastian, dragging the Lady Stags to four sets before yielding.

But the Tigresses are expected to come out with a better performance after a lethargic performance against the Lady Stags.

Alex Mistica, Maika Ortiz and Mary Jean Balse will spearhead the Tigresses against the Lady Stingers, who will be hamstrung by guest players Michelle Laborte, Princess Palec and reigning Betty Grumbles, Kyra Aglinao and Sheryl Desalla.

Siso family affair in Smart Jr. netfest

SIBLINGS SALLY MAE AND BERnardine Siso shared the spotlight in the fifth leg of the Smart-Gilas Junior Tennis Satellite Circuit 2018 at San Mateo Island Tennis Club in Lapu-Lapu City.

Sally Mae topped the girls' 16-under and 18-under divisions in resounding fashion, while Bernardine ruled the boys' 18-under.

Wasting behind a strong baseline game, Sally Mae routed Cebuana Ian Kimmet, 6-3, 6-2, before easily burying sister Sally-Bee, 6-1, 6-1, in the 18-under finals.

The victories allowed the Siso siblings to secure spots in the Junior Masters later this year.

Topping their respective divisions in the event sponsored by Smart Sports, in cooperation with Head, Dixie Sports, Tsubasa and Intersales were Arthur Craig Ramirez (10-under netters), Andrea Bernardette Zoyer (12-under), Gilbert Wee Alfonso (girls' 12-under), Eduardo Asuncion Reyes' 14 boys under), Anne Diana Ugale' 14-under and Bogelie Fuentes (boys 16-under).

Smart Gilas five nips San Diego

MARK BARROCA CELEBRATED HIS BIRTHday with a three-pointer in the dying seconds that lifted Smart Gilas Philippines to a pulsating 84-81 squeaker over the San Diego Surf on Sunday at the SteelCase Arena in Miramar College in San Diego.

Trailing, 81-80, the 5-foot-8 Barroca launched the game-clinching try with 9.2 seconds remaining to the delight of Filipino fans who came in droves to cheer for the Nationals.

Greg Slaughter paced the Nationals with 13 points, 14 rebounds and five blocked shots in the start of the 10th men's three-game tuneup with nine ballclubs.

The Nationals led by 12 points in the final half but their 16 turnovers backfire mildly by San Diego-Surf.

Smart Gilas coach Rajko Toroman praised the performances of the 6-foot-11 Slaughter, who remains the team's primary option in the paint should the team fail to acquire an import for the 2018 Asian Games in Canagzhou.

The Nationals take a rest today before meeting the Riverside Sunbrokers on Wednesday at the Warrior Luther King High School in Riverside, California, and the Southern California ABA All-Stars on Saturday in Chamberwear.

After the ABA series, the RP five will travel to Las Vegas and play at least three club teams.

Smart Gilas, one of the foreign teams in the 2011 ABL season, is preparing for the Fiba Asia Champions Cup next month in Qatar.

The squad is also seeking a slot in the 2018 London Olympics through the 2017 Fiba Asia Championship qualifying. *Jose Flaviano*

CLEVELAND'S LeBron James (right) blocks Chicago's Jaakim Noah. • AFP

Cavaliers, Spurs, Jazz take 3-1 leads

Heat stay alive versus Celtics

CHICAGO—LEBRON JAMES HAD 35 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists, while Kristaps Anstsins scored 24 points as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Chicago Bulls, 123-98, Sunday afternoon to take a 3-1 lead in their first-round NBA playoff series.

The Cavaliers led by 16 at halftime after scoring 36 in the second quarter and broke it open with a 37-point third, pacing them to positions to close it out at home on Tuesday.

James was at it again after scoring 46 and 39 the previous two games, connecting almost whenever he wanted and from wherever he wanted. He was 8 of 9 on three-pointers, including a jumper from just inside midcourt at the end of the third that made it 99-76.

Chicago got 27 apiece from Dwyane Wade and Jimmy Butler, who also pulled down 20 rebounds, but the Bulls are on the verge of their second straight first-round exit.

As Mirotic, Dwyane Wade set franchise playoff records with 46 points, including 30 in the second half, as the heat staved off elimination by beating Boston, 105-102, in Game 4 of an Eastern Conference first-round series.

Desperate to extend their season, the Heat opened the fourth quarter on a 23-8 run, fueled mostly by Wade, who made 16-of-24 shots from the field.

Quarter

Dion Waiters scored 20 points and Michael Beasley added 15 for the Heat, who still trail the best-of-seven series 3-1.

Rajon Rondo led the Celtics with 21 points. Game 5 is Tuesday in Boston.

At San Antonio, George Hill scored 26 points, helping the Spurs overcome a miserable night from Tim Duncan and take a 3-1 lead over Dallas in its first-round series with a 92-89 edging of the Mavericks.

The Spurs have won three straight since coach Gregg Popovich criticized some of his players and they've put the No. 2-seeded Mavs on the edge of their third first-round exit in four years.

Game 5 is Tuesday night in Dallas.

At Salt Lake City, Gordon Hayward had 31 points and 13 rebounds, while Derrick Williams added 24 points and 15 assists as the Utah Jazz held off a late charge to beat Denver, 117-108, for a 3-1 lead in the Western Conference playoff series.

Game 5 is Wednesday in Denver. *AP*

FCBL: Light Bombers, Greenies down foes

JOSE REGALADO STRETCHED ITS WINning streak to three games, while La Salle-Green Hills hammered out a 67-46 squeaker over STI College to gain a piece of the second spot with themselves in Group A of the 2018 Foreign Filipino-Chinese Basketball League (FCBL) Cup over the weekend at the Philippine Red Cross Gym in Quezon City.

John Fernandez finished with 25 points and 13 rebounds as the light bombers repulsed Stelar School, 84-81, to join Mapua on top with a 3-0.

The Greenies drew the game-winning free throws from Joe Villarta, then snatched STI bangle to find possession to escape with the victory.

Steve Mcnamara proved to be the culprit for STI as he lost control of the ball in the dwindling seconds. The defeat sun STI's second straight.

Ian Bells, the LSGH, also stayed relevant in two games by hurting for Nation U, 110-75, in Group B.

What's bad with the Lakers?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

NOW SURE ARE YOU LA LAKERS FANS (let's title and drown it) Los Angeles, California, nonsense?

For the first time in their great championship history, the Lakers appear in need of a shakeup before proceeding with their Western Conference series against the startling Oklahoma Thunder.

Yes, a routine shocking but not a mandatory overhaul, please.

The situation, after all, is not yet hopeless.

* * *

It's like their fitness coach earlier, the usually complacent Lakers sputtered over the weekend.

There were also bothersome cracks here and there.

In reversals, the defending NBA champions got shattered back-to-back in Oklahoma.

The solid thing here is that practically all the good parts were intact.

Something was indeed horribly wrong.

* * *

But don't ask what that was.

Rather, don't what's bad with the Lakers.

That's the perspective here. LJ. Skinner of the Los Angeles Times, who was there at practice—and more to the dugout—during the Lakers' drilling hours over the weekend.

Steven Skinner: "The Lakers, disorganized and inconsistent, have been thrown one for the second time in less than a month."

* * *

This was how Skinner saw LeLou Game 4 of their series against Oklahoma.

"You saw Isaac Bobo, the facilitator who was Game 4, not taking his first shot of the evening until there's a little more than nine minutes left in the second quarter."

By now could be a fault, not bookable.

"He's still benched from getting into the 10 in the fourth quarter of Game 2?

"He was the one of his pastoral calls after being criticized by folks for shooting too much—throwing everyone when it's like when he doesn't shoot?"

* * *

Anyway, Skinner said that, before Game 4, coach Phil Jackson said he and Bobo reviewed the fourth quarter of Game 3.

Skinner said Jackson noted "how dicey" that should have never been taken.

Jackson also noted Bobo does with intensity to the basket only once.

In Game 4, Skinner said Bobo scored like "he's under-inflated in there."

Bobo didn't smash.

He took no shots in the first half, four in the third and, before they knew it, the game was over—5-8 nothing by 22 points.

* * *

Meanwhile, Skinners also proceeded to check on what went right with the Thunder.

"They play with only four starters, and it definitely was not a case of four to Oklahoma's bench," he wrote.

This was what Skinner drew: "The Oklahoma bunch contributes in more subtle, it you don't count their rookies—youngin, Jerian and, right now Jerian, those who the Lakers are throwing against them. They shoved Jerian Bobo, 19 for 19, until Adam Morrison removed the game."

Of course, there still always be grudgings. Kevin Durant to top the plus factor for Oklahoma.

* * *

"On the whole, they look as if they know what they're doing—their bench is more efficient—unlike the Lakers who were disorganized and shot-selected."

But why did the Lakers ignite?

"The Oklahoma Thunder, unlike the Lakers, didn't whine so much."

* * *

HEPOLLUS IS RAMIFIED. Clint Dicus Hepolis, who earned he was proud that he and his family were "part of the Philippine history," is now the basketball coach at Hanover Area, now wants headgear fans to free with assistance from the most wagery that there are no chances hiding around. Experts, managers head down towards, Manila, who with his family the other week what he daughter Lailla had her big-consulting a total of P5,000, including important cards . . . It's unsure conclusions—not again—concern scribe Percy Della from Sacramento, California, on his message in the family of the well-ad-mired Sallie Calzados, who will be laid to rest today.

Puyat nails Texas junior crown

FILIPINO junior ace Harold Puyat takes first AJGA/Honma Hale crown.

HOUSTON, TEXAS—LEJANDRO TEEHANKEE MANUEL Puyat surged back from five strokes down with a solid 2-under-par 70 Sunday to capture the boys' crown of the AJGA-Under Armour/Honma Hale Championship in Houston, Texas.

The 17-year-old Puyat erupted a four-bogey on the 11th hole with three birdies to beat Will Johnston by one shot with a 54-hole total of 216 at the TPC Craig Ranch course.

Daniel Lee, who started the day five shots ahead of Puyat, Johnson and new others, finished with a 77 and ended up in joint third with Lee McCoy (68) of Florida and Al Mahoney (70) of Nevada at 218.

"My game plan was to make pars on the tough holes and be aggressive on the easy holes," said Puyat, the KCIS-backed ace who posted a stunning last-hole birdie at the US Amateur Championship last year.

It was the first victory in the American Junior Golf Association circuit of Puyat, said to be on the short list of coaches of the University of California-Los Angeles, Duke and Stanford.

The AJGA gives young netters and veterans chance to earn US college golf scholarships.

Puyat opened with a 72 Friday and then followed it up with a 74 in the second round.

Interaksyon@inquirer.net

Steve Gilbey, Contributor

Batangas-Cebu group hosts NCA derby today

ANOTHER ACTION-PACKED derby is expected today when the National Godson Alliance (NGA) holds its weekly fights at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig.

A prelude to the NCA World Championship derby on May 25, 27 and 29, the derby is sponsored by De Batangas and Cebu groups.

Among the participants are Patrick Antonio, Iggy Arroyo, Ito Ynares, Ferdie Bautista, Efren Catalan, Bete de Guzman, Bete dela Rosa, Jet Bernardo, Hermen Ong, dela Cruz, Tommy Chua, Jun Bogoo, Rudy Angoo, Jr. Magsaysay, Eddy Magtoto, Ernie Medina, Elias Fajardo, Elmer Magsaysay, Larry Flores, Rene Revadon, Armand and Manny Santos, Juan Soriano, Rebel Villar and James Uy.

The NCA-NCD will be followed by the 6-cock NCA Big event on June 8.

SPORTSWATCH

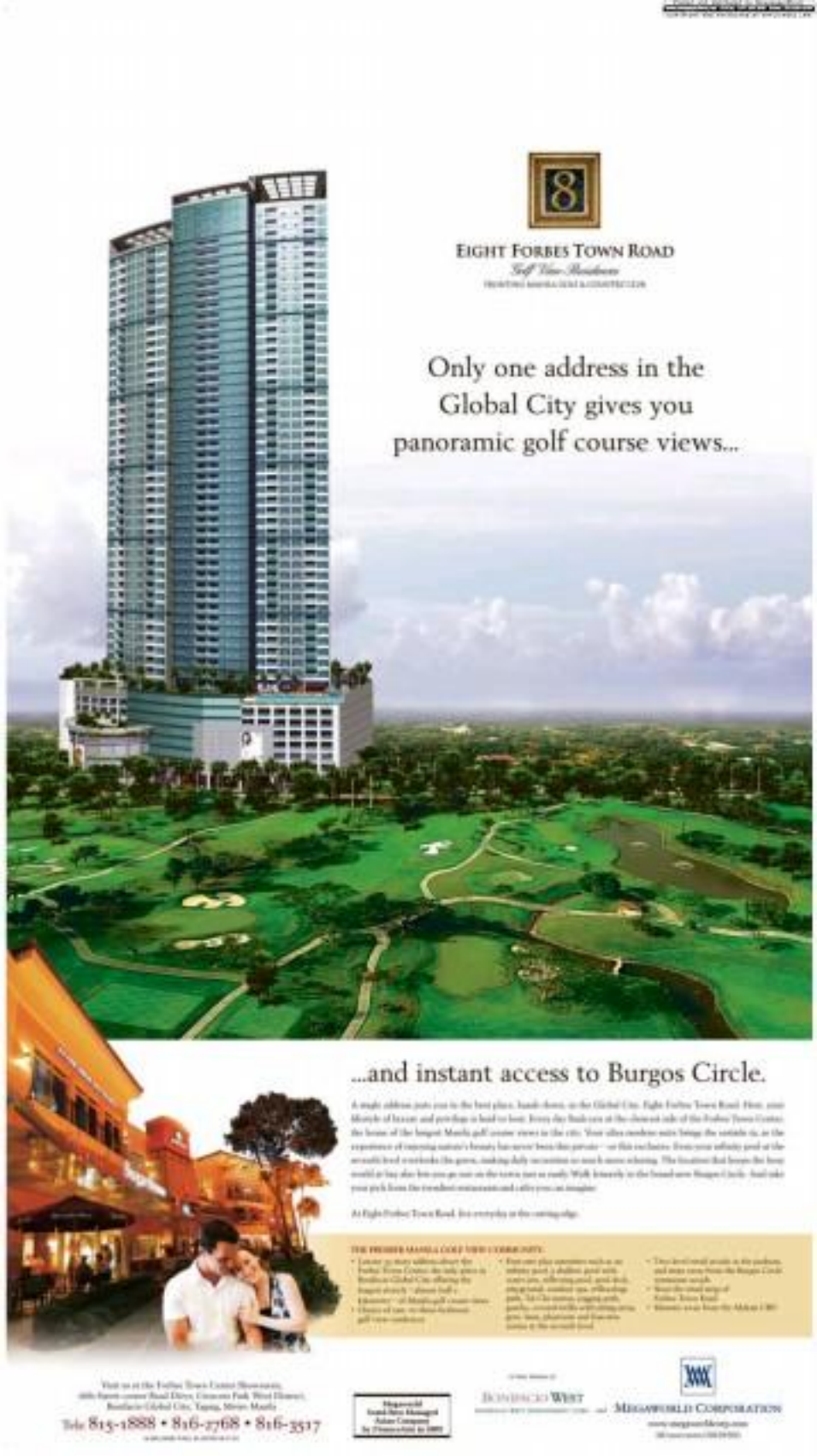
Religon holds 70 fights today

LEADING COCKFIGHTERS FROM PAMANGGE, MUNTINLUPA, PASAY, Makati, Las Piñas and Cavite converge at Religon Mega Complex in the Governor Heal 4-Cock Derby today involving more than 70 fights starting at 9 a.m. Among the contenders are Jed Nita (Muntinlupa), Mike Sison, Alberto De Mel Carreta, Vice Mayor Ruben Aldonga, Ed Moreno, Boy Ilusty, Benny Lado, Junior Cadle, Eric Alba Nona and Nino Burgos. A guaranteed prize of P500,000 awaits the winners. Call 09.152.7170 or 0929-9289 for details.

PCSO amateur boxing tourney a success

ORGANIZERS OF THE PCSO-THE KUMBINSA MAKATI BOXING CHAMPIONships declared the PCSO-Mayor's Cup amateur boxing tournament over the weekend with an Saturday at the Cordeleria Sports Center in Taguig. "They're all the amateur contenders and that since most of them have learned only the basics more," said Edgardo "Boy" Cornelio. "But a lot of them showed some real potential and we are pleased with the national boxing season that is to come." Among the winners were Jonathan Mendoza, Jerwin Ancajas, Lipke Arbolario, Jayke Cabuhat, Pedro Conchito and Jonel Isogo.

inquirer@inquirer.net Philip Luis Castro, and sightseers Angelo Ito Barcelona and Mariknas Llanado.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DID YOU KNOW

While the British invaded Manila in 1762, about 1,000 students and professors of the University of Santo Tomas fought them until 1764.

Cpnl. Bindhairis Inquirer Research

STANDING from a distance as smoke billows from the burning house, a Filipino cradles his head on a burning house on E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue in Quezon City. The fire raged for more than 12 hours over night before it was finally put out.

12-hour fire in QC destroys 800 houses

By Julie M. Aurelio and Bianca Gail, trainee

A MAN DIED WHILE THREE others were injured in a 12-hour fire that raged from Sunday afternoon until early yesterday morning in E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue in Quezon City.

The lone fatality was identified by arson investigators as Andrei Deromales, 32, who suffocated from the deadly smoke that filled his house in Barangay Damayang Lagi. The flames, however, did not reach his home.

Fishers said Deromales was reportedly drunk and asleep when the fire broke out.

Arson investigator SFO1 Reynaldo Cabillon said the blaze destroyed around 800 homes and left 3,000 families homeless as it raged for more than 12 hours.

The injured were identified as Anthony Jose, who suffered burns on his face and chest; Russel Pillo, who sustained burns on his chest; and Victorio Alinsay, who suffered second degree burns on his left hand.

Finger-pointing

Cabillon said two residents, Cynthia Serrano and Melchor Espallardo, had pointed to each other as the owner of the house where the fire started.

He added that he was basing two reports that the blaze was sparked by an unattended stove at the house of either Serrano or Espallardo.

However, Cabillon said he suspects that an illegal electrical connection may have caused the fire.

Both Serrano and Espallardo would be invited by the Quezon City Bureau of Fire Protection officer for questioning, he added.

The fire began at around 5:47 p.m. on Sunday and soon reached Sitio Roces Ilcho.

Firefighters were able to place it under control at around 7:30 p.m. but it was only put out at 4:22 a.m. yesterday, Cabillon said.

The damage to property was estimated at around P30 million.

NCRPO reports decline in Metro crime rates

By Mike Navalo

CRIME RATES IN METRO MANILA DROPPED IN the first quarter of the year, a positive development that Director Roberto Rosales attributed to the election gun ban being implemented by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) in coordination with the police.

In a statement, Rosales, National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief, said that the decrease in the number of rape, car theft, robbery, physical injuries and murder cases were also due to the programs being implemented by his men.

"The NCRPO has positively gained so much in its effort to rid the metropolis of crimes but there is still a long way to go. The best assurance that we could have for a peaceful and orderly election is that we intimidate crimes and the opportunity for its commission in our community," Rosales added.

Based on an analysis of crime incidence in the first three months of the year, robbery incidences decreased by 31 percent to 702 cases, compared to 931 during the same period in 2009.

The same trend was reported in carnapping incidents which decreased by 18 percent to 129 cases from January to March this year compared to 152 last year.

For physical injury cases, a 74 percent drop was reported this year with 606, down from 1,036 last year.

The police also noted an eight percent drop both in murder and rape cases.

Rosales said the decrease in crime rates were due to the increased police visibility program he implemented since the start of the election period.

However, the NCRPO chief said he would continue to push for the installation of surveillance cameras throughout the metropolis to deter criminals.

At present, several cameras placed at strategic locations in different cities are being monitored by the NCRPO at its state-of-the-art tactical operations center in Camp Bagong Diwa.

COMMON POSTER AREA A man doesn't seem to mind even though the facade of his house is splashed with the campaign posters of candidates running in Pasay City.

Kho lawyer cautions court against double jeopardy

By Ezra Maica Reyes
Contributor

THE LAWYER OF DR. HAYDEN Kho Jr. yesterday sought the dismissal of the sex-violence against women case filed by actress Katrina Halili against her client, saying the prosecution might have committed "double jeopardy."

Lucita Kapauan asked the Pasig Regional Trial Court Branch 159 to junk the case, noting that while the prosecutor's resolution finding probable cause to indict Kho had accused him of uploading a video showing him and Halili having sex, he was also being prosecuted for illegally taking the video without the actress' consent.

"We might be in double jeopardy," the said Rodolfo Bonifacio, the presiding judge. Double jeopardy refers to a principle in law under which "no person shall be twice put in jeopardy of punishment for the same offense."

But Raymund Palad, Halili's lawyer, objected to Kapauan's motion, saying that what Kho did was still in violation of Republic Act 9262 or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act.

He said the act of taking the video may be considered an act of psychological violence. "The dizziness is damaging to the act of disseminating the video," Palad told reporters after the hearing.

During the hearing, Halili, upon cross-examination by Kapauan, described her relationship with Kho before the video had been taken and uploaded on the Internet.

She said she was not angry at Kho's friends but at Kho himself for taking the video without her knowledge. Halili added that she did not believe Kho when he said it was his friends who had uploaded the video.

In response to Kapauan's motion, the court told both parties to submit the facts of the case within 10 days. The next hearings were set on June 7, 14 and 21.

3 thieves killed in shootout with cops

By Jumanoca L. Ambrade
and Paulo Cuenco, Interns

LAWMEN KILLED three suspected thieves in a shootout in Manila on Monday after the gang allegedly robbed a van driver and his helper of cash and cellphones.

The suspects, who were killed in a hail of bullets after they refused to surrender, were identified as Jayson Ramos, 25, Jeffrey Ramos, 23, and Jerry Ramos, 21, all residents of Tondo, Manila.

Police said the three were killed after they opened fire on a team of police officers who were trying to arrest them for the robbery of Jaime Ramos, 45, and Jeffrey Ramos, 23,

Most tourists stranded by volcanic ash home soon

LONDON—MOST TOURISTS STRANDED by the volcanic ash crisis will be home by Monday although thousands could be stuck for nearly another week, European airlines and government officials said.

A week of airspace closures caused by ash spewed by Iceland's Eyjafjallajokull (pronounced ay-uh-fyah-tlah-yer-kuhtl) volcano prompted the worst breakdown in civil aviation in Europe since World War II, with about 100,000 flights canceled.

Mark Tanzer, chief executive of Britain's ABTA, which represents British travel agents and tour operators, said about 300,000 stranded British travelers should have been returned home by Monday morning. About 35,000 more will remain stranded until Friday, the group said.

"While most flights are back to normal, and most stranded British passengers will be back by the end of this weekend, there is still quite a high level of disruption in some destinations," Tanzer said.

Airlines said about 2,800 Belgians are stuck mainly in Egypt and Tunisia and 3,000 Swedes around the world, with large numbers in the volcano area. Iceland's Civil Protection Agency said.

"The intensity of the volcanic plume is slowly decreasing," the agency said in a statement. But it added that there are "no indications that the eruption is coming to an end."

Scientists said this weekend the volcano is suddenly as powerful as some bodies disruption in European airspace, as the ash plume is now too small to reach jet streams and because winds have changed direction.

Scandinavian Airlines said passengers still waiting for flights to long-haul destinations including Bangkok would be home within days. "We are confident that by Monday all passengers will be returned to Europe," Scandinavian spokesperson Pia Sundhe said. "The situation is fully under control."

In Belgium, foreign affairs spokesperson Patricia Ceysens said some travelers should be on the way on Monday at the latest. "There are still some problems in Bangkok and the United States but we expect a lot of departures today and Monday," he said. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

British ambassador in Yemen escapes suicide bomb attack

SANA, Yemen— The British ambassador narrowly escaped what appeared to be a suicide attack on his convoy in the capital Sana on Monday morning, Yemeni officials said. British Embassy spokesperson Charne Mortimer said the ambassador, Timothy Torlot, was unhurt, but the attack underlined the perilous security in Yemen. An impoverished Arab nation in the southern corner of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen has in recent years become a haven for al-Qaida militants taking advantage of the government's limited authority outside major cities and tribal centers over the rest of the country. *AP*

Phone-tapping scandal engulfs India government

NEW DELHI—India's opposition warned on Monday that democracy was in danger as it demanded answers from the government over allegations that senior politicians' telephones had been tapped. Press reports in the government intelligence agencies secretly listened in to mobile telephone conversations of leading public figures have united opposition groups and plunged the government into crisis ahead of a crucial vote. *AFP*

90,000 protest US base relocation on Okinawa

TOKYO—More than 90,000 Okinawans rallied on Sunday to oppose the relocation of an American air base on their island, adding to the pressure on Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama to resolve an issue that has divided Tokyo and Washington. The demonstrators demanded that Hatoyama scrap a 2006 agreement with the United States to move the Futenma Marine Corps Air Station to a different site on the island. Since his party's election victory last summer, Hatoyama has promised to come up with an alternative plan that would reduce the American presence on the southern Japanese island. Home to nearly half of the 50,000 US military personnel in Japan, he has given himself until the end of May to put together such a plan that would also be acceptable to Washington. *AFP*

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

IN THE MATTER OF DEFINING THE CHAIN OF CUSTODY AND RESPONSIBILITY OVER THE PCOS MACHINES AND THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO BE PROVIDED BY THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP) AND THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (AFP) IN CARE, IN THEIR STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL OF PCOS MACHINES AND ITS ACCESSORIES; DELEGATION OF OFFICIAL AUTHORITY; SECURITY OF POLLING CENTERS AND CANVASSING CENTERS; AND LIS MOTIONES OR SALIOR TORTO, TO CONSIDER DOCUMENTS AND OTHER PAPHERNALIA

RESOLUTION NO. 8822

WHEREAS, in a letter dated March 22, 2010, Police Director General Jesus A. Verzosa, (DGV) to Chair Brillantes requested the issuance of a COMELEC Resolution defining the following:

1) Security reinforcements to be mobilized by the PNP and AFP in the deployment and retrieval of PCOS machines and its accessories, delivery of official ballots, among other things; and
2) The chain of custody and responsibility of the PCOS machines and accessories from the warehouse to the polling centers and back to the warehouse after the said machines in the polling centers shall have;

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the powers vested in it by the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act No. 9369, and other election laws, the Commission on Elections, RESOLVED as it RESOLVED, as follows:

Section 1. Designation of PCOS machines, accessories, official ballots and other election paraphernalia. – The PNP or AFP through the appropriate Joint Security Control Center (JSCC) shall:

a) Provide security assistance as necessary to ensure that PCOS machines, accessories and official ballots and other election paraphernalia are safe in transit;
b) Provide adequate escorts to all trips and platoons in coordination with the regional commanders (RDs) and with the Election Officer concerned in the case of municipalities located outside the city or municipal cities;
c) Provide appropriate security according armies, AFs, and a possible citizen-arm volunteers within the vicinity of the PCOS machines and accessories at the said centers, while the PCOS machines are at the said centers, and to ensure that the same are not tampered with except by the BEI in the Watch Room / at performance the various operations, subject to Section 4 hereof;
d) Ensure that appropriate security measures, commensurate to the threat situation in particular areas, are observed while the PCOS machines and accessories are in transit, and after which the PCOS machines are still in the polling centers; and
e) Plan and AFP officials shall not be restricting the transport PCOS machines, accessories, official ballots and other election paraphernalia, except in case of force majeure, duly certified by the concerned COMELEC official who has jurisdiction of the area where the emergency happened or occurred. The responsibility of any such act SHALL that may arise from the failure handling and transport of PCOS machines to their ultimate destination shall be a subject of policy various remarks and Administrative Code that is the exclusive of the PNP or AFP. Provided, PNP and AFP personnel may exercise discretionary powers in the physical handling of any election paraphernalia/equipment.

Sec. 2. Custody of the PCOS machines and accessories. – DEPARTMENTS, OR shall have custody of the PCOS machines and accessories, and the official ballots and other election paraphernalia in the hotel or publicity, and up to the polling centers. The custody shall LAW in the Election Officer concerned when the PCOS machines and accessories are transported to the corresponding BEIs. The PNP personnel assigned to the PCOS machines and accessories in the designated polling centers, the AFP shall maintain said machines and accessories for and in behalf of the Election Officer concerned. Provided, that the PCOS machines and accessories shall be under the custody of the BEIs when they are actually using the same.

After the conduct of elections, the BEI in charge shall turn over the PCOS machines to the SMARTMATIC-TIM Technicians. At this point, the custody of the PCOS units lasts to the SMARTMATIC-TIM Technicians the SMARTMATIC-TIM shall have custody and responsibility over the PCOS machines in their vehicle and escort to the warehouse.

Sec. 3. Security of PCOS machines and election accessories under Polling Centers. – After the casting and counting, the PCOS machines and accessories will remain under the control of the polling officers and the PNP personnel assigned thereto. However, the PCOS machines and their peripherals may be opened to use CD to make certain if the same polling center for possible reasons. For the purpose, the Election Officer shall be the only one authorized to open the PCOS machines and its peripherals. The PCOS machines and its peripherals may be opened by none as in the case of unauthorized court or a commission, the Provincial may be allowed to be done within the court or commission or in a room of any within said facility. The Election Officer shall be accompanied by the AFP and PNP personnel assigned to the PCOS machines and their accessories will be secured in the polling places where they were used for at least 5 (5) or more hours within the same polling center.

Sec. 4. Movement of PCOS machines and election paraphernalia. – In the election day, security elements shall also inspect the BEI Chairman routes from the polling center they are assigned except when there is no actual deployment of the personnel involved therein, without serial no. a written BEI chairman's request. In the case of the BEI Chairman, the security escort shall be provided by the PNP personnel assigned to the polling center. In the case of the Election Officer, the security escort shall be provided by the PNP personnel assigned to the Provincial Election Supervisor or Election Officer, as the case may be. In the case of the Election Officer, the security escort shall be provided by the PNP personnel assigned to the Provincial Election Supervisor or Election Officer, as the case may be.

(ETC) may publish security assistance desk to oversee security in the area, subject to the 1st paragraph of Section 5 hereof.

Sec. 5. Security procedure during the retrieval of PCOS machines and election returns and after the election paraphernalia.

The JSCC shall provide appropriate security assets to the BEIs carrying the election returns and other documents and paraphernalia from the Polling Centers to the Municipal Treasurer's Office and to the Provincial Treasurer's Office.

PNP and AFP units shall provide the necessary security measures during the retrieval of the PCOS machines, upon request of the SMARTMATIC-TIM technicians.

Sec. 6. Coordinating Instructions. – All Regional Election Directors, Provincial Election Supervisors and Election Officers, in coordination with the PNP and AFP, shall be responsible for the faithful implementation of the said security measures provided herein. All necessary coordinations in the area are hereby directed to provide all the necessary information regarding the PNP or AFP in effecting the implementation of this Resolution.

Sec. 7. Applicability to other activities requiring AFP or PNP security. – The provisions shall mutatis mutandis, also apply to other activities requiring AFP or PNP security.

Sec. 8. Effectivity. – This Resolution shall take effect upon its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Sec. 9. Publication and dissemination. – The Education and Information Department shall cause the publication of this Resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines and in the Official Gazette, and furnish copies of this Resolution to the Regional Directors, the Provincial Election Supervisors, and Election Officers, with copies of the Resolution, for their information and guidance.

SO ORDERED.

JOSE A.R. MELO
Chairman

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

LUCENITO N. TAGLE
Commissioner

ARMANDO C. VELASCO
Commissioner

Dr. Official Business
ELIAS R. YUSOPH
Commissioner

GREGORIO Y. LARRAZABAL
Commissioner

Promulgated: April 20, 2010

NOW, THEREFORE, the Commission on Elections, pursuant to the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act No. 9369 and other related laws and rules, does hereby RESOLVE, as it hereby RESOLVED, to promulgate this Resolution supplementing the provisions of Resolution No. 8705, as follows:

1. The Board of Election Inspectors shall open in that the ballot box shall remain sealed and locked during the voting, counting and canvassing of votes, except that it is deemed necessary to make room for additional official ballots, the BEI, through the chairman, may in the presence of the members and watchers, unlock the padlocks of the ballot box, open the ballot box and place therein additional official ballots, and thereafter lock and seal it with padlocks as provided;
2. Such lack of opening and closing of the ballot box for the purpose of making room for additional ballots shall be recorded in the Minutes of Voting and Counting;
3. This Resolution shall be made applicable to the General Instructions for the Board of Election Inspectors relative to the conduct of the 10 May 2010 National Elections.

Let the Education and Information Department cause the publication of this Resolution in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation, and furnish copies thereof to all field offices of the Commission and to the Boards of Election Inspectors.

SO ORDERED.

JOSE A.R. MELO
Chairman

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

LUCENITO N. TAGLE
Commissioner

ARMANDO C. VELASCO
Commissioner

Dr. Official Business
ELIAS R. YUSOPH
Commissioner

GREGORIO Y. LARRAZABAL
Commissioner

Promulgated: April 20, 2010

RESOLUTION NO. 8824

WHEREAS, on March 22, 2010, the Commission on Elections promulgated Resolution No. 8705, providing for the general instructions to the Boards of Election Inspectors (BEI) for the polling, counting and canvassing of votes in connection with the May 10, 2010 National and Local Elections;

WHEREAS, Section 157 of Republic Act No. 8189 provides that it shall be the duty of the BEI to see that the ballot box shall remain locked during the voting;

WHEREAS, Section 197 (a) of the Omnibus Election Code (EP 881) provides in part:

(a) The box shall remain locked until the voting is finished and the counting begins. However, if it should become necessary to make room for more ballots, the board of election inspectors may open the box and place therein additional ballots presented by the voters and the chairman shall thereafter lock and seal the box with padlocks provided for that purpose;

WHEREAS, Section 15 of Republic Act No. 9369 provides:

"SEC. 15. Section 157 of Republic Act No. 8189 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 157. Procedure in voting. – The presiding officer shall announce the manner and procedure of voting, which can be made understood and followed by the voters, taking into consideration, among other things, the secrecy of the voting.";

WHEREAS, in order to ensure the smooth operation and forestall any possible blockage of deliberations from the Precinct count Voting System (PCOS) machine to the ballot box, there is a need to provide for additional ballots, as in the opening of the ballot box during the voting in order to make room for additional official ballots;

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

SUPPLEMENTAL PROCEDURES ON THE SECURITY AND TRANSMITTAL OF THE PRINTED COPIES OF THE CERTIFICATE OF CANVASS IN ORDER FOR THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS AND THE CONGRESS

RESOLUTION NO. 8826

WHEREAS, printed copies of the certification of canvass intended for the Commission on Elections and the Congress have to be delivered immediately after the conclusion of the municipality/city canvass;

WHEREAS, there is a need to ensure that the aforementioned copies are delivered in time to the Commission on Elections and Congress;

WHEREAS, Section 1 of Republic Act 9369 amending Section 2 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act No. 9369, and other election laws, the Commission on Elections RESOLVED as it hereby RESOLVED to promulgate the following procedures for the delivery and transmittal of the printed copies of the certification of canvass intended for the Commission on Elections and the Congress in accordance with the May 10, 2010 national and local elections:

Section 1. Delivery and distribution by the MBOC/DBOCS of the printed copies of the certification of canvass intended for the Commission on Elections and the Congress. – The boards shall deliver to the Election Officer concerned the envelopes containing the printed copies of the municipality certificates of canvass intended for the following:

a. Commission on Elections; and
b. Congress, one copy for the President of the Senate.

The envelopes containing the printed copy of the municipality certificate of canvass intended for the provincial board of canvassers shall be delivered to the Regional and Provincial Director of the National Capital Region (NCR) and Provincial Election Supervisor, respectively, and the envelopes intended for the Congress shall be delivered to the Regional Election Director thereof.

The envelopes containing the printed copies of the municipality certificates of canvass intended for the Commission on Elections and the Congress shall be delivered to the Election Officer concerned. The boards shall deliver to the Election Officer concerned the envelopes containing the printed copies of the municipality certificates of canvass intended for the following:

a. Commission on Elections; and
b. Congress, one copy for the President of the Senate.

The envelopes containing the printed copy of the municipality certificate of canvass intended for the provincial board of canvassers shall be delivered to the Regional and Provincial Director of the National Capital Region (NCR) and Provincial Election Supervisor, respectively, and the envelopes intended for the Congress shall be delivered to the Regional Election Director thereof.

Sec. 2. Delivery and transmittal by the election officer of the printed copy of the municipal city certificates of canvass. – The Election Officer shall personally hand the envelopes containing the printed copies of the municipality certificates of canvass intended for the Commission on Elections and Congress, and transmittal to Batasan Pambansa. Provided, the Election Officer shall also hand the envelopes containing the printed copies of the municipality certificates of canvass intended for the provincial board of canvassers, and deliver the same to the Regional Election Director thereof.

a. In the Metro Manila area:

The ballot boxes, and their keys, bearing the envelopes containing the printed copies of the certificates of canvass intended for the Commission, the Congress and to the Provincial Board of Canvassers, shall be delivered to the Regional Election Director of the National Capital Region (NCR) by the Election Officer concerned, who shall in turn deliver the ballot boxes to the Commission and to the Congress, together with their keys, in the company of the Election Officer concerned. The Election Officer shall secure from the Commission on Elections, and deliver the ballot boxes and their keys to the Metro Manila Provincial Board of Canvassers, which shall be composed of the NCR Regional Election Director.

b. In areas outside Metro Manila area:

The ballot boxes, and their keys, bearing the envelopes containing the printed copies of the certificates of canvass intended for the Commission, the Congress and to the Provincial Board of Canvassers, shall be delivered by the Election Officer concerned to the Office of the Provincial Election Supervisor, using the fastest means available, not later than twelve o'clock noon on May 10, 2010.

If within an hours of the first delivery, not all of the certificates of canvass from the city or municipality have been submitted, the Election Officer shall undertake another delivery of the remaining copies of the certificates of canvass to the Office of the Provincial Election Supervisor.

In all instances, the Election Officer shall observe and comply with the above procedure in delivering each copies of the certificates of canvass of elections of all the boards of election inspectors with all the certificates of canvass in the jurisdiction are delivered to the Office of the Provincial Election Supervisor at the earliest possible time, but not later than May 10, 2010.

Sec. 3. Delivery of the transmittal by the provincial election supervisor of the certified copy of the municipality certificates of canvass. – The Election Officer of the Provincial Election Supervisor shall personally hand the envelopes containing the certified copies of the certificates of canvass intended for the Commission on Elections and the Congress, and transmittal to the Election officers of the Municipalities of the province, and lower chain, except Batasan Pambansa.

For the purpose of delivering the printed copies of the municipality certificates of canvass intended for the Commission on Elections and the Congress, the Provincial Election Supervisor shall designate and seven election assistant to submit the same to the Office of the Senate President and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, respectively. The Provincial Election Supervisor shall issue him the first delivery, using the fastest means of transportation. Copies of the certificates of canvass which are received after the departure of said personnel shall be delivered by the Congress and to the Commission on Elections personnel in the Office of the Provincial Election Supervisor within twelve hours from the first delivery.

In all instances, the Provincial Election Supervisor shall see to it that the above procedure of delivering each copies of the certificates of canvass of elections of all the boards of election inspectors is faithfully complied with. In the event of delay in the delivery of the certificates of canvass to Congress and the Commission are delivered not later than May 10, 2010, in every case, delivery shall be undertaken with sufficient speed and safety and shall not be unreasonably delayed or obstructed by any person.

Sec. 4. Delivery and distribution of the printed copies of the certificates of canvass prepared by the PBOC and letter of votes accompanying box or bags separate election that are not using the precinct count optical scan (PCOS) machines. – The PBOC shall personally hand the envelopes containing the printed copies of the certificates of canvass prepared by the PBOC, or any certificates of canvass prepared by the DBOC of national positions and/or municipal/city positions, and immediately after the canvass, personally deliver the ballot boxes and the keys to the Clerks in the case of the copy for Congress, and to the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) or to such other place as may be designated by the Commission on Elections, and quickly and without the delays, with sufficient security escort from or after the PBOC or DBOC.

The envelopes containing the printed copies of the certificates of canvass intended for the other portion of municipal/city positions shall be delivered by the Election Officer concerned to the parties or organizations who have been authorized by said parties or organizations. If there are no party or organizations representatives in the canvassing venue, the copy shall be delivered to the Regional Election Director, Provincial Election Supervisor or Election Officer concerned, as the case may be, who shall issue a receipt therefor.

Sec. 5. Effectivity. – This Resolution shall take effect on the seventh (7th) day after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Sec. 6. Publication and dissemination. – The Education and Information Department (EID) of the Commission on Elections shall cause the publication of this Resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines, and furnish copies thereof to all regional offices, provincial election supervisors, regional election directors, the Department of Education, the Philippine National Police, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

SO ORDERED.

JOSE A.R. MELO
Chairman

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

LUCENITO N. TAGLE
Commissioner

ARMANDO C. VELASCO
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(ERA – April 27, 2010)

The WORLD

Editor Lamberto B. Gioco

Thai protesters told to ditch red shirts as crackdown nears

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S "RED SHIRT" protesters, wary of a possible crackdown, told their followers to ditch their signature crimson attire so they can go undercover as more bomb threats rattled the tense Thai capital on Monday.

Three men on motorcycles in the upscale Bangkok shopping area where protesters remained camped for a 24th day, but an explosion injured eight people late Tuesday near the home of former Prime Minister Banharn Silpa-archa, who is allied with the ruling coalition, police said.

A fourth slipped town veiled early Monday as the city's financial district amid reports of another explosive device at the edge of Silom Road, where live grenade blasts last week left one person dead and more than 90 wounded. It was a false alarm.

Both sides in Thailand's protracted political crisis have dug in following a breakdown of negotiations and a televised appointment on Sunday by the premier-overseer that allowed no solution to the protracted crisis.

At least 26 people have been killed and nearly 1,800 hurt since the Red Shirts began occupying Bangkok's commercial center more than a month ago, closing down five-star hotels and shopping malls, paralyzing daily life in the city and costing merchants millions of dollars a day.

Thousands of Red Shirts camped in the protest enclave on Monday heeded a call by protest leaders to change into regular attire so they will not be visible if security forces move to clear the area and send them fleeing into city streets.

The strategy was also aimed at helping protesters coming in from rural provinces get past military and police checkpoints, one protest leader Kokiem Phuikhong told Thai Rath newspaper.

Meanwhile, a group of crossdressing protesters known as the "Yellow Shirts" have stepped up demands that authorities crack down on the demonstrators, implying they might take matters into their own hands if nothing is done soon.

"The government has the responsibility to protect the people, but instead shows its weakness and inability to enforce the law," said Sathienti Kittudla, a leader of the Yellow Shirts. AP

Was North Korean general promoted for sinking South's warship?

SEOUL—SEOUL IS INVESTIGATING whether a deceased North Korean general has won back his former rank as a reward for the sinking of a South Korean warship, an official said on Monday.

North Korean TV footage and a still photo released over the weekend showed Kim Myong-Guk wearing a uniform with four stars on the collar.

Kim, who heads the graves of state's operations bureau, had been demoted to a lieutenant general in January, military sources disclosed.

"We are trying to check what's behind his promotion," a South Korean intelligence official told reporters.

"We are trying to see if the promotion was related to the sinking of the Cheonan but have reached no conclusions yet." There was speculation that Kim had been a key supporter of Jang Song-Thaek, the influential husband of leader Kim Jong-Il's younger sister Kim Kyong-Hui.

On March 26, an explosion sank the Cheonan, a 1,200-tonne South Korean corvette, near the contested border with the West Sea.

Seoul officials suspect a torpedo attack—possibly in revenge for the November clash. They have not so far publicly blamed Pyongyang pending a full-scale multinational investigation.

The general—ignoring his four stars—was shown briefing the North's leader Kim Jong-Il in front of a camouflaged military base at an undisclosed location.

Weighing the newspaper said Kim was not among those named in a mass promotion of generals to mark this month's birth anniversary of the North's founder Kim Il-Sung.

"It is extremely rare for a general who wasn't included in the main promotion to move up a rank in a separate move," an unidentified official told the paper.

"We're trying to determine whether Kim's promotion was related to the Cheonan's sinking." South Korea on Sunday began five days of national mourning for the victims, with public shrines set up in Seoul and other cities. A photo exhibition opened in Seoul in their memory.

President Lee Myung-Bak, accompanied by senior government officials, on Monday joined a stream of mourners to pay homage at an altar outside City Hall.

Suspicion has increasingly fallen on North Korea despite its denial of involvement.

Defense Minister Kim Tae-young said on Sunday a test probing attack—creating a bubble jet which's tore the ship apart—was among the most likely causes of the sinking.

Yoon Duk-Yong, co-chairman of an investigation team including US and Australian experts, also said on Sunday a non-contact explosion was the likely cause. AFP

Spammers turn to outsourcing to break codes

MUMBAI, INDIA—FACED WITH stricter Internet security measures, some spammers have begun borrowing a page from corporate America's playbook: They are outsourcing.

Sophisticated spammers are paying people in India, Bangladesh, China and other developing economies to tackle the simple tasks known as "captchas," which ask Web users to type in a string of vexed-obscured characters to prove they are human beings and not spam-generating robots.

The going rate for the work ranges from 80 cents to $1.20 for each 1,000 deciphered letters, according to online exchanges like Freelancer.com, where dozens of such projects are bid on every week.

Luis von Ahn, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon who was a pioneer in devising "captchas," estimates that thousands of people in developing countries, primarily in Asia, are solving these puzzles for pay. Some operations appear fairly sophisticated and involve bosses and middlemen, he added.

Sitting in front of a computer screen for hours on end deciphering convoluted characters and typing them into a box is monotonous work. And the pay is not great when compared to more traditional data-entry jobs.

Still, it appears to be attractive enough to lure young people in developing countries where even 20 cents an hour is considered a decent wage. Unskilled male laborers sometimes make about $2 a day in many parts of India.

Ashraf Islam Jhuru, a 20-year-old college student in Bangladesh, said he has scores of 30-other students who work for him filling in "captchas." (The son is a boss acronym for "completely automated public Turing test to tell computers and humans apart.")

He said the students typically work two and a half to three hours a day from their homes and make at least 80 every 15 days; they earn more the faster and the more accurate they are. It is not a lot of money, he acknowledged, but it requires little effort and can help supplement their pocket money.

Executives at Internet companies like Google say they do not worry a lot about people being paid to decode "captchas" because they are one of several tools that websites use to secure themselves. Some sites, for instance, eight-or-so-word combination codes as text messages to cell phones, which does have to be connected to a separate verification page before new e-mail accounts are activated.

Von Ahn said that the cost of hiring people, even as cheap as it may appear, should limit the extent of such operations to only spammers who have figured out ways to make money. "It's only the people who really actually are already profitable who can do this," he said. NYT

GIVE US YOUR BEST SHOT!

Manila Broadcasting Company invites you to send us your best images of the Philippine's grandest festival featuring this year's streetdance competition, float parade, and the search for festival queen.

ELIGIBILITY

- Open to both amateur and professional photographers.
- Photos must have been taken on April 24, 2010, during the streetdance competition proper, and should not have won nor have been published in any manner of form.
- Participants may use any digital or film-based camera. Entries must be printed in full colour on any brand of photo paper in 8R size (8 inches x 10 inches).
- Manually retouched and/or painted over print outputs, and any form of major manipulation of the main image are not allowed, although digital retouching on density, contrast adjustments, minor cropping, burning, and dodging may be tolerated. Creative effects done within the camera at the time of exposure e.g. multiple exposures, flash fill, lighting, filtration, etc. are allowed.
- Maximum of five entries per photographer – 3 taken during the dance competition, and 2 photos from the float competition. Photographs must be of different dance contingents or floats.

PRIZES AT STAKE

First Prize:	Second Prize:	Third Prize:
P50,000	P25,000	P10,000

SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES

- Each entry should be submitted in an envelope with an Aliwan Fiesta Photo Competition entry form in triplicate (one copy attached to the photograph, one for the receiving staff, and one copy for the photographer-entrant).
- Entry forms may be downloaded from http://www.aliwanfiesta.com.ph
- The name of the photographer should not appear on the face of the entry.
- Entries should be submitted to Elvi Baltazar or Susan Arcega at the Manila Broadcasting Company office, Sotto Street, CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City (for details, call 832-6125 or 6800-3477).
- Deadline for submission of entries is on May 14, 2010 at 12 nn.

CHERRYLUME
MARANAW ASIA CORPORATION

Editor Raul G. Manuela ■ Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano
BUSINESS

ViewSonic PURE!™ TFT Projector

Inflation seen to range from 3.9% to 4.8%

By Reena V. Domingo

THE RISE IN CONSUMER prices in April is expected to accelerate, and may range between 3.9 percent and 4.8 percent year-on-year due to higher costs of energy, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

BSP Governor Amando M. Tetangco Jr. said yesterday that rising oil prices and electricity rates would push inflation above the 4.4 percent recorded in March.

Higher energy costs likely to fire up rise in consumer prices

Tetangco added that, on the other hand, lower rice prices and the slight appreciation of the peso would moderate inflation.

"Based on the current assessment of inflation risks, including the likely trend in oil and non-oil commodity prices, this estimate would allow inflation to settle within the 2010 target range," Tetangco explained.

Monetary authorities want to limit the rise in the cost of living to within 3.5 percent and 4.5 percent this year.

Also, the BSP's Monetary Board expects full-year inflation to settle at 5.1 percent.

Data from the National Statistics Office showed that inflation in March rose to a three-month high of 4.4 percent as clothing, services, and fuel, light and water (FLW), registered faster price hikes.

This led inflation to revert to its December level, with the first quarter average settling at 4.2 percent.

In March, the rise in the cost of living was about two-thirds as fast as the 6.4 percent recorded in the same month of 2009.

That month, price hikes for FLW items jumped to 10.6 percent from 11 percent in February.

Also, price increases for services and clothing fired up to 6.8 percent and 2.1 percent, respectively, from 5.8 percent and 2 percent.

On the other hand, price hikes for the heavily weighted food, beverages and tobacco dipped to 3.1 percent from 3.8 percent.

NSO administrator Carmelita N. Ibasco said annual inflation for food alone at the national level moved at a slower rate of 3.1 percent in March from 3.6 percent in February.

SMC to acquire Ashmore's Petron stake

By Doris C. Dumlao

SAN MIGUEL CORP. IS SET TO exercise its option to acquire a significant stake in a unit of London-based Ashmore group that holds a controlling stake in the country's largest oil refiner Petron Corp.

To prepare for this transaction, which may take place before the end of the month, San Miguel will issue a tender offer for the common shares of Petron held by the public at P6.05 a share, the diversifying conglomerate yesterday reported to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

San Miguel will undertake the move to comply with the tender offer rule, which is meant to protect minority shareholders by giving them the opportunity to sell their shares for the same price a new investor will be willing to pay to acquire a significant block.

SMC said its executive committee had authorized management to exercise the option to acquire—on or before April 30—40 percent of the outstanding common shares of Isla Refinery Corp.

That option is contained in the terms and conditions of a December 2008 agreement, which the conglomerate had executed with SEA Refinery Holdings B.V.—one of the Ashmore group representatives by Jaime Trade Minister Roberto V. Ongpin.

SMC 32

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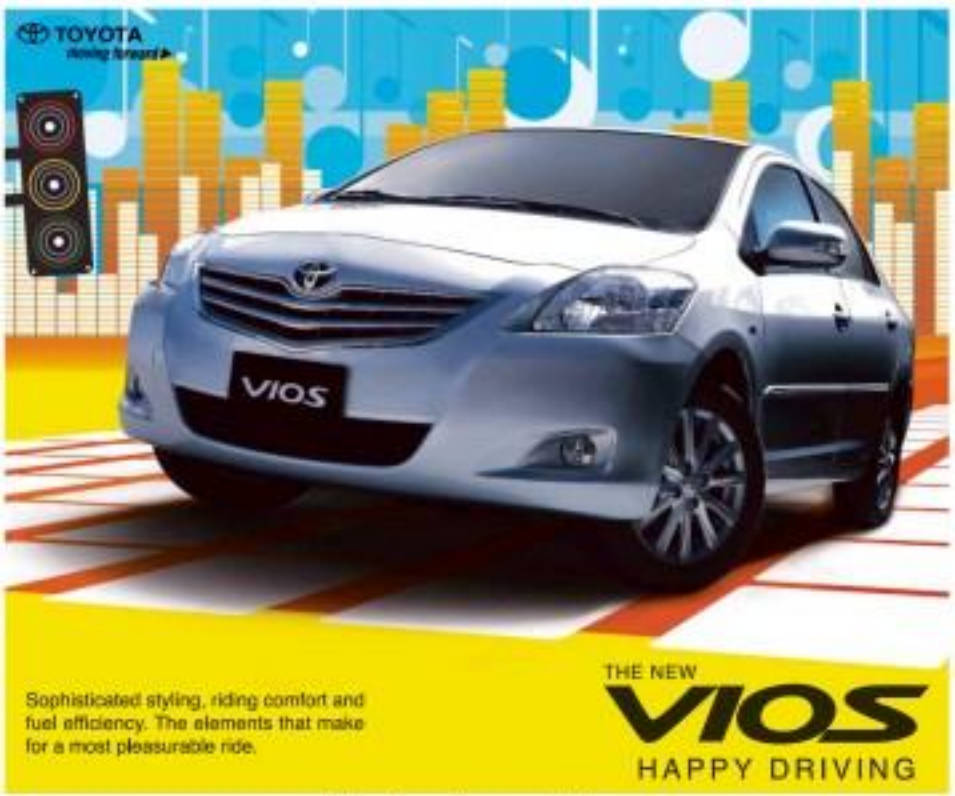

Top nut to crack

Conrado R. Bautista III

KNOWN SIMPLY AS PDIC TO the hapless victims of bank frauds, Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. is no longer a hapless entity.

And the dramatic change took place in less than a year.

Barely the long string of bank closures since 2008, including the wicked banking scam called "Legacy," thanks in that swell guy Celso "Boy" de los Angeles, forced PDIC to turn itself inside out.

For example, learning from the Legacy scam, PDIC now sought from Congress an overhaul of the PDIC charter for it to become more alert to similar schemes in the future.

I have a little piece of good news. Today, the deposit insurance fund of PDIC amounts to P80 billion.

That means, to the gentlemen here in my cramped, that they can will rely on PDIC to pay for their insured deposits in banks. You know, just in case. . .

Anyway, as an indication of how swift was PDIC has become, it even realized a profit of about P400 million last year.

In other words, PDIC is doing well, thank you. And this despite all the revolving door drama unfolding over its Legacy.

* * *

IN LATE 2008, as we all know, the pyramid of the Legacy group collapsed, leaving hundreds of thousands of its depositors and investors in misery.

That year, PDIC validated close to 140,000 so-called "depositor" accounts in some 12 banks of the Legacy group. It was not easy for unknown number of the "depositor" were fictitious and fraudulent.

As if the Legacy mess was not enough pain in the a. . . PDIC also had to contend with 35 rag-tag banks closures in the same year.

And so PDIC had to validate more deposit accounts (only more than 200,000) in those banks.

It is hard to say whether or not the PDIC staff even slept at all.

* * *

ANYWAY, in his first year in the company, the top executive of PDIC, banker Jose Mojarro, underwent a baptism of fire. He assumed the position in early 2008, a few months before trouble in Legacy erupted. The man did not crack.

Perhaps his experience in that troubled year in banking taught Mojarro that PDIC could not remain a passive player in the financial system.

Fast of all, when banks failed, it was PDIC that took the hit. Yet the company had little... if any...role in the supervision of the very same banks that could wipe out PDIC chest.

And so Mojarro went to Congress for some drastic changes in the PDIC charter, in the process crossing a bit of Tiber with the Rangkoo control.

JOB—perhaps it did not how PDIC that Mojarro had a brother in the House of Representatives who happened to be only the Speaker.)

Anyway, with changes in its charter, PDIC was able to increase the deposit insurance coverage from P250,000 to P500,000 per depositor.

Not only that, from now on, PDIC does not have to go back to Congress for further increases. Now it only needs the approval of the President of the Republic.

All right, it is hard to say which, between Congress and Malacañang, is the tougher nut to crack.

Let's just say it may be easier to talk to one person than to more than 200 lawmakers, and many of them may not even have any idea what PDIC is all about.

* * *

TO BE, nevertheless, the most important changes in the PDIC charter involved some structural reforms.

For one, the company needed some breathing spell in its finances. It got a five-year tax break. It also had to raise money. The new charter authorized the company to bonds that were guaranteed by the national government.

PDIC now has power to conduct special bank examinations. Thus, the company may now examine deposits as long as there is evidence of "unsafe and unsound" banking practices.

Watch out, all those "Legacy" scammers in the making!

Asean all set to ink 'open skies' deal

By Paolo G. Montecillo

THE PHILIPPINES AND ITS NEIGHbors in the region are in the process of sealing a new accord that will remove all flight restrictions throughout Southeast Asia.

Under the new "open skies" deal, the number of flights in a certain point will be decided based on demand instead of a predetermined limit. The deal is currently being fine-tuned ahead of the transport ministers of the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

The Philippine government is ready to sign the deal, the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) said. Acting Transportation and Communications Secretary Arnold Lemoc recently was given the authority to sign the landmark deal by Malacañang.

"The Asean multilateral agreement on passenger services will open up unprecedented opportunities," CAB Deputy Executive Director Antonio Pastoriza said in an interview.

At the moment, Asean has an existing open skies deal that covers only major airports, or just Manila for the Philippines.

The new deal opens up all other international airports in the region in the Philippines, these include terminals in Clark Freeport, Cebu City, Davao City and Subic Bay.

Under the schedule, the deal must be signed by June 2018, Pastoriza said.

Currently, the contract is being fleshed out by the region to be signed by the transport ministers of each member country.

The deal is meant to encourage trade among member nations in the region. It is also seen as a step toward the establishment of the Asean free trade agreement.

The new deal will also allow local airlines to move easily expand their routines.

Pastoriza said officials in the region are also close to striking an open skies deal with China.

"We have been invited to meet with Chinese officials in Hangzhou [from May 31 to May 14] to discuss details about the deal," he said.

The premier plan to discuss the duration of "fifth freedom" air rights between China and the region.

The rights will allow an airline of one country to land in a second country, pick up passengers and fly on to a third country where the passengers may then deplane.

Once the air rights have been signed, Asean officials may focus on striking similar deals with countries like India or Taiwan, which have both expressed interest in liberalizing air rights within the region, Pastoriza said.

Accord will open up RP airports, boosting trade, passenger traffic

New greenback is counterfeiters' nightmare

By Konrad W. Domingo

THE UNITED STATES HAS UNVEILED A new $100 bill with a unique security feature not seen in any other greenback.

US Embassy and US Secret Service officials said the redesigned the $100 note has an inkwell that will help merchants spot counterfeit bills and thus foil any attempts.

The new bill was unveiled in Washington DC last week and yesterday in Manila. It will start circulating on Oct. 10, 2013.

Susan Doherty, economic counselor at the US Embassy, said the Philippines was also notified of the key countries where a global public education program would be implemented.

"This is because Filipinos are among [heavy] users of US dollar bills mainly because of overseas Filipino workers and their families," Doherty explained.

She said other heavy users of dollar bills are countries in South America, which frequently receive remittances from their citizens working in the United States.

The $100 note is the highest denomination that the US government issues, and the most widely circulated outside the United States.

"Although less than 1/100th of one percent of the value of US currency in circulation is reported to be counterfeit, the $100 note is the most often counterfeited denomination outside the US," Doherty said.

According to Armando L. Suratos, deputy governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the BSP cash department has confiscated and disseminated 17,203 pieces of counterfeit dollar notes of various denominations between 2005 and 2008.

"The amount of these fake dollar bills total $219,7 million, with $100 notes representing 78 percent of total notes," Suratos said.

Shares closed up

From page B1

60 advancers and 32 decliners, while 63 stocks were unchanged.

Companies whose stocks gained from yesterday's rally were Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Ayala Power Corp., Metro Pacific Investments Corp., Energy Development Corp., Ayala Land Inc., Century Iron Metal Holdings Corp., Ayala Corp., Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. and Petron Corp.

In the United States last Friday, the Dow Jones Industrial Index kept an eight-week upward as investors took comfort from a potential International Monetary Fund and European Union bailout package for Greece.

The Dow gained 69.99 points or 0.65 percent to close at 11,006.28.

The Nasdaq and S&P 500 were also up by 21.08 points (0.44 percent) and 8.61 points (0.71 percent), respectively.

Boris C. Bershidsky

SMC to acquire ...

From page B1

Ongpin is also a key player in a holding company that holds a significant voting stake in San Miguel.

The purchase of a 49-percent block in the company that controls 58.1 percent of Petron will give San Miguel an initial 28-percent stake in the oil refiner.

The conglomerate earlier announced that it planned to take control of the oil refiner. South Korea's state-run Aramco will also buy additional Petron shares from the Ashmore group at a different price in the future.

Petron shares jumped by 10 percent or P6.60 a share after San Miguel announced the deal, according to stock traders.

The oil refiner's shares currently in the hands of the public are equivalent to 9.4 percent of its outstanding stock...roughly 991 million shares—based on the latest data from the PSE.

Meanwhile, San Miguel said in its disclosure to the exchange that Ahmar Mohsin, son of former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir, had quit as board director effective April 15.

Mohsin is part of the Q-Tech Alliance Holdings, which last year bought the 29-percent stake of Japanese brewer Kirin in San Miguel.

His entry in San Miguel early on caused quite a stir in Malaysia due to Jun Miguel's interest in beer breweries...something that did not sit well with conservative Malaysian Muslims.

PROGRESSIVE RURAL BANKING CORPORATION

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

As of 31 March 2010

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Items	P	37,581,651
Due from Banks-Savings Deposits		1,081,211
Due from Banks-Time Deposits		10,000,000
Other Investments		2,000,000
Loans and Receivables (Net)		1,111,111,111
Investment Properties (Land, Buildings, Improvements and Equipment)		1,111,111,111
Other Properties Owned, Furniture and Equipment (Net)		1,111,111,111
Deferred Tax Assets		1,111,111,111
Other Assets		1,111,111,111
TOTAL ASSETS	P	1,111,111,111

LIABILITIES

Deposit Liabilities	P	1,111,111,111
Bills Payable		1,111,111,111
Unsecured Subordinated Debt		1,111,111,111
Deferred Tax Liabilities		1,111,111,111
Other Liabilities		1,111,111,111
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	1,111,111,111

STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY

Capital Stock	P	1,111,111,111
Additional Paid-in Capital		1,111,111,111
Retained Earnings		1,111,111,111
TOTAL STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY	P	1,111,111,111
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY	P	1,111,111,111

wi-tribe moves up with cutting edge technology and innovation

Liberty Broadcasting Network, Incorporated, backed by Don Miguel Corporation and Cilia Group, enters the Fourth Generation Technology (4G) era with its brand, wi-tribe wi-tribe showcases the future of multimedia as it takes the online lifestyle a step further offering broadband services using 4G technologies today.

Today, wi-tribe introduces an industry-first MOVE MORE launch with no demand.

MOVE MORE is an innovative add-on product feature that enhances your current post-paid plan. With MOVE MORE, you will be able to surf more and download more while maintaining your plan's speeds even after your monthly usage allowance runs out. For only P200 per 4GB, you will have an extra bandwidth on demand service. It's bandwidth when you want it, when you need it. Can you get extra bandwidth when you want it with your current broadband subscription?

You can avail of MOVE MORE bandwidth on demand whether you're on MOVE UP Plan888 or MOVE UP Plan1888.

With wi-tribe's MOVE UP Plan888, you will enjoy unlimited surfing and browsing with consistent speeds of up to 1Mbps on your first 6GB usage per month. For netizens with bigger surfing appetites, wi-tribe has the MOVE UP Plan1888 that delivers uninterrupted surfing and browsing with consistent speeds of up to 2Mbps on your first 12GB usage per month.

With normal internet usage you can enjoy your plan's speed for the rest of the month. For heavy usage, your speed can go lower, but the good news is you can still surf and browse. That's because wi-tribe's MOVE UP Plans are unlimited. Even if you use up your monthly usage allowance before the end of your monthly billing cycle, you can still surf at 128 kbps. This gives wi-tribe 4G broadband service for surfing and browsing at satisfying speeds of below 5 Mbps for the MOVE UP Plan 888 and below 4Mbps for the MOVE UP Plan P1388. That is still better than the speeds of other broadband services. You pay no speeds will be refreshed on your next monthly billing cycle.

wi-tribe is responsive to the needs of today's broadband subscribers by having the only service provider with upload broadband. While other providers offer unlimited surfing and browsing only with actual speeds that are lower than their claims - wi-tribe delivers quality of service with fast and reliable speeds that give you the non-disconnectable internet experience you truly deserve.

It all starts with 4G broadband today. Be switching 4G multimedia services tomorrow. For more information about wi-tribe, log on to www.wi-tribe.ph or call 311-tribe today.

Logistics firms join protest vs port operators

A GROUP OF OVER A HUNDRED LOGISTics service providers are complaining about delays in shipments of vital commodities from Metro Manila to the Visayas and Mindanao due to alleged inefficiency of Manila North Harbor's new operators.

In a statement yesterday, the Supply Chain Management of the Philippines Inc. (SCMAP) said their shipments experienced unwelcome delays at the North Harbor in Tondo, Manila, disrupting trade to other parts of the country.

The group blamed Manila North Harbor Port Inc. (MNHPI), which took over operations last April 11, for the delays due to mismanagement of the port.

"The supply of goods and commodities to Visayas and Mindanao has been disrupted by problems arising from the sudden takeover of the Manila North Harbor by private consortium MNHPI," SCMAP said.

MNHPI is a joint venture between the Ramon Ang's Harbour Center Port Terminal Inc. and Metro Pacific Investments Corp., the local infrastructure giant chaired by Manuel V. Pangilinan.

The major users of domestic shipping services, over 130 member companies would like to express their grave concern over the slow service they are currently experiencing at the Manila North Harbor due to the sudden takeover of the port without prior notice," said SCMAP president Teresita D. Lim-Sy.

He said that the delays had increased the costs of shipments and affected the distribution of products in the Visayas and Mindanao.

"Out of stock situations for our members' products will lead to lost sales, and are bad for the economy as a whole," he said.

But MNHPI officials have denied these claims, saying that the firm has more than complied with the minimum requirements for North Harbor's operations set by the Philippine Ports Authority. Paolo G. Montecillo

EU travel ban worries local travel agencies

By Abigail L. Ho

THE EUROPEAN UNION'S BAN ON PHILIPpine-registered airlines has rendered the services of local travel agencies by at least 10 percent since its implementation late last year, according to the Philippine Travel Agencies Association.

In a statement issued yesterday, PTAA president Ma. Fe Alberto said that although no local airline had done flights to Europe, the EU ban had a negative ripple effect on inbound travel.

For now, Chess Pasti, EU member states would get negative advisories against traveling to the Philippines and those who would still want to travel to the country would need to be photocopied insurance, she explained.

She said local travel agencies offering inbound services also had to cancel the international component of their European clients' packages as these usually take one of domestic airlines.

"The EU ban could not have come at a worse time, she said, as local travel agencies were now starting to receive strong demand from European markets.

"We have been getting a lot of inquiries and bookings from continental France and Britain, though it is such a big comfort that we are only more slowly penetrating," she said, adding that the ban would ultimately hurt the tourism industry in general.

Considering this, the PTAA urged Prime Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, in his last few months in office, to work toward convincing the EU to lift its ban on local carriers.

"We want to help the Department of Tourism achieve its targeted 15 percent increase in tourist arrivals. We hope Malacañang will do its part," Alberto said.

And if the EU ban was not enough, she said local travel agencies encountered to battle increasingly cheap and frequent online promotions by airlines and hotels.

These promos encouraged travelers to book their flights and accommodations on their own, sans the help of travel agencies.

While generally cheaper than most travel agency offerings, she said online bookings made travelers prone to inconveniences, especially when unexpected things happen.

Using the recent disruption of flights to and from Europe due to a volcanic eruption in Iceland as an example, she said thousands of passengers had to endure queuing for hours just to have their tickets changed or refunded.

Q1 coconut oil exports surge

COCONUT PRODUCTS exported some 548,000 metric tons of coconut oil in the first quarter, according to preliminary data by the Philippine Coconut Authority.

Preliminary CIF data showed exports for 330,000 tons in January and 90,000 in February, and about 128,000 tons in March. Shipments in the same period last year were placed at just 180,000 tons.

Henry T. Lao, group vice president and chief trading officer, attributed the export surge to the recovery in local supply of copra, which dropped significantly in late 2009 due to typhoons. Supply was followed by the second half of 2009 and carried over to early 2010, Lao said.

The dry spell is not seen affecting production, at least for this year, he said.

He said the effect of El Niño on coconut plantations, if any, is always delayed. Any drop in harvest due to erratically dry weather would show for 6th annual next year, he said.

Jesus L. Arranza, president and CEO of the CIIF Oil Mills Group, said that coconut production is expected to remain robust this year. He said there are ongoing seed distribution and related programs being considered to improve farm yields.

He said the CIIF itself distributed coconut seeds in barrios and also constructed roads in the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA).

"PCA has its own planting program, as well as sub-level farmers and post production," Arranza said.

He said fresh funding for these programs are needed. This is partly why the CIIF group wants access to the CIIF Oil dividends that were placed in escrow after controversies from corporate practices.

Rico C. Ocbenia

ALI takes control of El Nido

By Doris C. Dumlao

PROPERTY GIANT AYALA LAND Inc. is set to take control of upscale El Nido Resorts in Lagen and Miniloc Islands in Northern Palawan, marking a major expansion into the country's promising tourism business.

ALI told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that it would venture into the development of "responsible" tourism destinations in Northern Palawan by taking a 60-percent stake in Asian Conservation Co. (ACC), which owns and operates El Nido Resorts through its subsidiaries under the Ten Knots Group.

The ALI-ACC partnership is expected to develop more eco-friendly resorts in the country. It is believed in line with the thrust of the 15th-year-old Ayala conglomerate to be more conscious not just of profit and people but also of the planet in doing business.

"It's really part of what we're saying that we'd like to expand into tourism side as well as in the hotel business is that's implementation of that strategy," ALI president Antonino Aquino said in an interview yesterday.

Aquino said ALI would come in as a controlling stockholder of ACC by infusing more capital for the development of the resorts, awarded El Nido Resorts.

"We'll be effectively adding more... more so that we will in turn develop more facilities," he explained.

ACC is an environmental preservation company put up by a team led by former Energy Secretary Vicente Perez, an advocate of marine conservation, sustainable tourism and sustainable energy.

"We are excited to have ACC as our new partner, with their unique experience in managing island resort properties and their strong adherence to a philosophy fostering growth and preserving the environment around their resort properties," Aquino said in a statement.

The Palawan-based firm, for the part, said in the same statement that ACC was pleased to have ALI as its strategic partner. "[T]his strong corporate philosophy on sustainability and their passion built around a leading world class tourism projects."

El Nido Resorts bagged the "Wild Asia Responsible Tourism Award" in 2000 and was one of the 15 "Great to Green Hotels" recognized by Travel + Leisure magazine in 2007.

Conglomerate raises stake in tourism

The PSE Chairman's Cup

LAST SATURDAY, APRIL 24, THE Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) held its 14th Chairman's Cup Golf Tournament.

It was held once again at its adopted home course at the Tagaytay Midlands Golf Club in Silang in Cavite City and this was the second year that the event was held at this sweltering time of the year.

Old players would not help but express their longing for the times when the Chairman's Cup was held earlier in the year—like February—when the weather is cooler and the fairways greener and accordingly more inviting.

My party was at the South Lanes flight (twosome) [10:01] a few minutes after five in the morning. But traffic was surprisingly heavy.

Traffic in Ilala became a struggle as the morning wore on, according to those who hit Ilala just minutes after us.

The new format of the tourney, however, made up for all the players' woes. It was a 4-person team scramble set play. Everyone seemed to have enjoyed playing a as everyone appeared to be delighted with their experience.

The new format generated timing in the session and its ultimate purpose. The prizes, too, have become more interesting despite the more austere budget compared to last year.

Aside from being more imaginative, the organizing committee was reportedly more attuned to the needs of the general membership.

The 14th Chairman's Cup Golf Tournament, therefore, was a success. There was more evidence of diligent effort in making it something to look forward to.

The organizing committee had indeed done a good job. My sole proposal to the committee chair, broker-dealer Al Ye,

MARKET RIDER

Dave Sotnero

Meaning of the event

I realized later that the event was held about a week before the holding of the PSE annual elections.

According to old-timers, the event has always been calculated that way, for why?

I did not bother to ask former PSE chairs, like Felipe Yap and Harry Liu, whom I bumped into during the golf tournament.

This was because the point at hand was more about the relevance of the occasion to the outcome of the present announcement of candidacies.

In the past, the Chairman's Cup was imaginably a reminder to nominating stockbrokers voting for incumbent positions that they should stay united because of the need to lead as one body to the industry.

But that reason doesn't seem to fit now.

The event, according to an old-timer who spoke on top from my quiet contemplation, is now nothing but a consolation as brokers have been consigned to the background when it comes to managing and shaping the affairs of their own industry.

Bottom line spin

Even before the Chairman's Cup, there seems to be mounting reluctance among the stockbrokers.

If I were an investment adviser, the many small and big remarks I've heard so far can straight call, the gist is simple. It's about a deserved throw towards the purging of their membership ranks.

In the standings for seats in the board, the odds in favor of brokers are not sufficient to elect all nominated brokers. Talk says that one of them may not make it.

This is because their leaders have been oblivious to, if not entirely neglectful of, the need to advance and protect their group's interest, according to emerging consensus.

Interestingly, this was described to be a premise that will happen also in the by-yellow or orange color seen in the May 10 national elections.

Info for PHC

Former PCGG representative and chair of Philcomsat Holdings Corp (PHC) Sonny Salonga, who is a candidate for stockholder-representative of the Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc.—was also in the PSE Chairman's Cup.

In between playing cues with some other personnel who were promoting a new development project of Bello Corp, to the area, he had kind enough to give me a little time for a chit-chat.

His aide should be of interest to the management and board of PHC...the group with which the PSE is in talks for the rehiring of PHC shares.

Salonga, this way he sounded, he might put house something that the current PHC management and board do not know.

It's about the 20,807-square-meter property in Pasig that PHC supposedly owns and is now selling or may have already sold. He insisted that the ownership of said property has been changed. Management should check with the proper government agency about the title of said property, he intimated.

To his knowledge, the property may have been transferred and accounted under the name of commissioned and former PHC vice president Philip Boiles.

This may reach the Market Rider at: marketrider@inquirer.com.ph or directly at dsotnero@yahoo.com.

SMDC enters mass housing

SM DEVELOPMENT CORP., THE RESIdential property arm of tycoon Henry Sy's SM Group, is entering the affordable housing market as part of its goal to grow its net income by 20-30 percent every year for the next five years.

SMDC booked a net income of P922 million in the first quarter of this year, up by 11 percent over the same period last year, as the company realized sales from residential condominium projects.

In a briefing after the company's stockholders' meeting yesterday, SMDC chair and chief executive officer Henry Sy Jr. announced the company's plan to offer residential units worth a maximum of P1.2 billion under a new brand, called "Sky Place."

The new brand, which is distinct from its core middle-income brand, "SM Residences," will debut in May starting with a new 2,000-unit condominium project near the ADB-CBD compound in Ortigas City.

"We believe this product will be another successful entry towards achieving housing demand in the Philippines," Sy said.

Sy added that the new brand would be affordable to the young people who want to buy a place of their own, such as the call center employees who tend to move out of their parents' homes.

It is also an ideal investment for those planning to offer short-stay options similar to Dubai, Doris C. Dumlao

PNOC-EC income down

By Alvin H. Batino

PHILEC LISTED PNOC-EC Corporation suffered a 43 percent drop in its net income to P1.8 billion last year from the previous year's P3.05 billion, due to the decline in the revenue of its major business units.

In a regulatory filing, PNOC-EC said revenue in 2009 dropped by 23 percent to P6.08 billion from the previous year's P8.01 billion due to a significant decline in the average gas and condensate prices. Lower volume of coal sold and reduced hardening services contributed due to decline in various drilling activities.

Of the total revenue of P6.08 billion, about 70 percent came from revenue of the Malampaya gas to power project under Service Contract 38. 30 percent from coal operations, while the remaining 1 percent came from the Energy Supply Base (ESB) earnings.

PNOC EC, the upstream petroleum and coal arm of Asia-can Philippine National Oil Co., explained that sales from the Malampaya fell by 19 percent due to lower sales of condensate.

Gas and condensate prices likewise dropped in 2009 to an average of $53.46 a barrel and $66.07 a barrel, respectively.

In 2008, gas prices averaged higher at $67.51 a barrel, while condensate was priced at $93.89 a barrel.

Phoenix Q1 sales surge

PHOENIX LISTED PHOENIX Petroleum Corp. recorded its gross sales revenue in the first quarter surged by 160 percent to P2.7 billion from P1.03 billion recorded in the same period last year, boosted largely by the increase in its retail service stations.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Phoenix Petroleum said its first quarter sales performance exceeded both target volume for the quarter and the comparative period's results in 2009.

"The additional stations ramped their presence in their respective trade areas and began contributing substantially to total volume turnover," the company said in a statement.

It added that its network in Visayas and Mindanao recorded double-volume growth as incremental network efficiencies yielded higher average sales per station.

As of end-March, Phoenix had 125 operational retail stations compared to 97 stations in 2009. Amy R. Rosco and Asian Horizons

COMPILED BY ALVIN H. BATINO, ANJANET REYES

SOURCE: PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

Currencies

April 26, 2010 Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Euro Equivalent
Australia Dollar	Dollar	3.5138	1.0000	0.6138
Brunei	Dollar	1.5178	0.4320	0.2651
Canada	Dollar	1.5178	0.4320	0.2651
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.2180	0.0621	0.0381
Netherlands	Guilder	0.3813	0.1085	0.0666
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.2180	0.0621	0.0381
Singapore	Dollar	1.5178	0.4320	0.2651
Switzerland	Franc	0.6135	0.1746	0.1071
Taiwan	Dollar	0.0304	0.0087	0.0053
United Arab Emirates	Dirham	0.1815	0.0517	0.0317
United Kingdom	Pound	1.6911	0.4813	0.2953
United States	Dollar	1.5178	0.4320	0.2651
Japan	Yen	0.0169	0.0048	0.0029
Korea	Won	0.0013	0.0004	0.0002
Thailand	Baht	0.0469	0.0134	0.0082
China	Yuan	0.2224	0.0633	0.0388
Denmark	Krone	0.2724	0.0775	0.0476
Euro	Euro	0.5724	0.1629	0.1000
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.0001	0.0000	0.0000
Kuwait	Dinar	5.4189	1.5421	0.9464
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.4722	0.1344	0.0825
Norway	Krone	0.2437	0.0694	0.0426
Sweden	Krona	0.2017	0.0574	0.0352

Source: Philippine Dealing System Holdings Corp. (PDSHC)
Peso Equivalent based on PDSHC rates - April 26, 2010
Dollar Equivalent based on Bankers' rates - April 26, 2010 ??? Unavailable

BUSINESS

Lack of trust, awareness hampers patent filing, says IP office

By Abigail L. Ho

PATENTS FILED BY RESIDENT individuals and creditors remain sparse at the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines, mainly due to lack of awareness of the process and trust in the system.

On the sidelines of World Intellectual Property Organization workshop yesterday, IP Philippines Director general Ricardo Blancaflor said that of the total patents filed with the agency, only about 5 percent come from resident filers.

The 95-percent balance come from foreign filers.

"There's clearly a lack of knowledge. Most of our non-technologies are based in universities, so we have to work together with them. Right now, we have partnerships with around 20 universities, but there are hundreds of universities in the Philippines that we have to reach," he told reporters.

"Enforcement is also a problem. The more you enforce, the more people will trust in the system."

"We have to increase the 5-percent level of local filers] regularly. By the end of my term (in five years), we should hit the 20-percent level he [said Blancaflor]," he said.

In terms of copyright registration, copyright examiner Michelle Tee said the country averaged 6,000-7,000 a year over the last five years.

This number, however, has started to dwindle.

"Maybe it's the cost that is a deterrent. It's just P500 per application, but some don't even want to spend that amount," she said.

She explained that copyright registration was good for anyone who wanted to protect his intellectual property, as an entry in the database served as "prima facie evidence of ownership."

"It's not absolute, but at least you have a record that you own a particular copyright. It's also for monitoring and record-keeping purposes, on our part," she said.

The IP Philippines copyright office was new in the process of digitizing its records as, Tee related, most of its records were still kept in record books, with only two people doing manual entries.

"The (digital record) will eventually be published on the website of the National Library for easy access. But for now, we're not even halfway through with the digitization process," she said.

P10-B investment eyed for transmission projects

Mitsubishi to use more local parts

MITSUBISHI MOTORS PHILIPPINES Corp. (MMPC) plans to increase its use of locally made auto parts, in conjunction with the hike in vehicle production at its Cainta plant.

According to MMPC president Masahiko Seki, the company gets 60 percent of the parts that it uses for its best-selling Adventure and L300 models from local sources.

"We want to use as many local parts as possible," he said at the launch of the new Fuso Canter in Pasay.

Apart from the Adventure and L300, he said MMPC was also using increasing the local components of the Lancer EX model, which the company began producing at its Cainta facility here last year.

Right now, only 5 percent of Lancer EX parts are locally manufactured, he said adding that this should increase to 10 percent.

MMPC, however, has no plan as of the moment to bring in completely knocked down (CKD) units for assembly here, he said. The increase in local vehicle production would depend on the signing of the New Motor Vehicle Development Plan.

In terms of sales, he said MMPC targeted a 20 percent hike this year, to around 27,000-28,000 units, from 23,247 units in 2009. MMPC also aimed to remain a strong No. 2 in the local auto market.

For the newly introduced Fuso Canter, he said MMPC targeted sales to reach 400-500 units this year for a 25-30-percent share of the light truck market.

But this year's sales target for the Canter line was lower than last year's actual sales of about 600 units, he said, as the newly launched truck cost a bit higher than the older Canter model.

"We have a lower target because (the new Canter) is fuel- 2-compliant, so it costs a little more. But I think the cruck market is growing, and this will be able to catch up with the passenger car market this year," he said.

Abigail L. Ho

Improvement of network reliability, power quality to meet rising demand

By Amy R. Remo

NATIONAL GRID CORPORATION OF THE Philippines (NGCP) plans to invest some P10 billion this year for its various transmission projects in the three main power grids, according to the company's top official.

In a briefing yesterday, NGCP president and CEO Ben E. Lopoz said part of the amount would come from the budget of National Transmission Corp., even as the concession's operator the country's electricity superhighway had already been privatized.

According to the concession agreement, the government until certain the assets (transmission lines), said Lopoz, who has been in charge of NGCP for only 15 days as of yesterday.

Data from the NGCP showed that it was planning to invest nearly P36 billion in the country's transmission network over a three-year period.

These projects are expected to help develop and improve the power transmission network in the country to keep up with growing power demands.

For 2009 to 2012, NGCP plans to infuse P9.35 billion into the Luzon grid, P9.21 billion into the Visayas grid, and P8.32 billion into the Mindanao grid.

The transmission projects form part of the company's efforts to upgrade and expand the power grids and at the same time, align their operations and maintenance practices with global standards.

The upgrade of transformers and facilities is part of the company's Transmission Improvement.

Latest NGCP documents also showed that the proposed mark orders in Luzon between 2009 and 2014 are mostly intended to improve network reliability and power quality. These include the replacement of old and slow power circuit breakers.

For transmission and sub-transmission lines, the proposed projects included the upgrading and rehabilitation of certain lines that have reached the end of their useful life; replacement of wood poles with steel structures to ensure confidence level of the line and replacement of temporary structures for supplied steel towers.

For the Visayas, the work order proposals primarily involve the replacement, rehabilitation, repair, and refurbishment of the existing substation, transmission, sub-transmission and support facilities aimed to enhance reliability and promote productivity.

In Mindanao, the work orders would include the rehabilitation of transmission line towers which were toppled or degraded due to sabotage and/or other phenomena that caused deterioration of the transmission line hardware. These projects were designed to ensure the continuous and reliable power supply on the island.

Makati pushed as MICE hub

By Dianne L. Lucas

THE LUCRATIVE MEETINGS AND events component of the Philippine tourism industry is expected to receive boost once Makati City launches a campaign to re-establish itself as a major destination for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibits (MICE).

In a statement, Makati Vice Mayor Ernesto S. Mercado said the city would be aim for a bigger slice of the MICE market through more effective marketing and promotion campaigns.

"Makati City is still the country's main business travel hub because it is where most multinational companies and banks are based," he said. "But we want to get a bigger slice of the lucrative meetings and events market."

According to statistics from the Department of Tourism, tourist arrivals in the Philippines reached 3.2 million visitors as of September 2009, with a significant number of these being visitors for MICE-related events.

Tourism Secretary Joe Durano is projecting a 15-percent growth in arrivals this year.

Mercado said he wants Makati City to spearhead Philippine tourism's bid for a bigger share of the meetings and events market by addressing key issues like technology, as well as ideas and concepts for meetings and events.

"Technology has made it possible for virtual meetings and events," he said. "But I believe there is still a big market that values face-to-face activities. Makati City can make a positive impact on Philippine tourism by positioning itself as a 21st century meetings and events destination."

Mercado's pitch is part of his campaign for the top post of the country's premier business city, where he is running against Councilor Junjun Binay, the son of outgoing Mayor Jejomar Binay.

In his statement, he revealed that he is also looking at the creation of a Makati Visitors and Convention Bureau to provide greater focus on tourism in general and the meetings and events sector in particular.

"We will also look at new ideas and long-term prospects," he said. "Makati City cannot be passive in marketing and promoting itself as a destination. We have to stay competitive because other cities are emerging as business hubs as well."

Private construction ventures up

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE VALUE OF PRIVATE SECTOR CONstruction projects in the fourth quarter of 2009 jumped 22 percent year-on-year to P40.06 billion, according to the National Statistics Office.

NSO data show that newly built residential and non-residential structures, including additions and repairs, done from October to December was 35.8 percent higher than the P34.58 billion in the previous quarter.

The construction industry was a major growth driver in 2009, posting growth in the gross domestic product despite the debilitating effects of the global financial crisis.

Based on the number of approved building permits, fourth-quarter private construction projects rose by 10.6 percent year-on-year to 32,456.

Compared to the third quarter, the number of approved permits surged by 10.7 percent from 22,017.

Residential projects grew in both value and number, increasing by 21.3 percent to P23.47 billion and by 22.8 percent to 26,454 permits.

With a total floor area of 2.7 million square meters, residential buildings dudled up an average cost of P8,775 per square meter.

Single-use units continued to make up the most number of residential building projects with 17,718 approved permits or about a quarter of all residential projects in the fourth quarter.

These projects were valued at about P3.31 billion with a total floor area of

497,288 sq. m at an average cost of P6,660 per sq. m.

LIFESTYLE Wellness

Why Johnny, Ting and Choy do yoga

These men show how this discipline has a place in their busy lives

YOGA at Manila Polo Club

By Joseph G. Cortes
Contributor

WHAT DO JOHNNY VE-lasquez, Ting Feliciano and Choy Cojuangco have in common? Aside from being successful businessmen in their own fields, they are passionate about yoga.

People often see yoga as a leisurely pursuit for women. Images of yoga enthusiasts stretching and limbering themselves up to contort their bodies into [illegible] are not uncommon. This is far [illegible] from the truth.

Yoga is a discipline that focuses on a holistic union of breathing, exercise and meditation to strengthen the body and clear the mind.

NEXT STORY: C2

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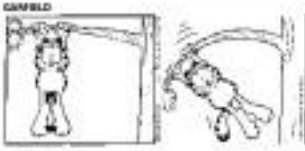
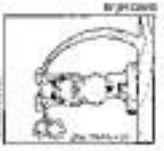
GARFIELD



BY JIM DAVIS



A LITTLE

PUGAD BABOY

BY PAT LIGHTER

DICK TRACY

LOVE HOTS

BY ELIZABETH HOROWITZ

JAMES BOND

DRONE COMEDY

BY STEVEN WALRAVEN

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

TULDOK

BY NINA COLL

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

BIRD MACHINE

BY MARK ABRAM

MARMADUKE'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Financial or money problems could be holding up for you because of someone's unwillingness to cooperate. Be patient.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): The only full Moon that is visible between your sign's waking place and sunrise. This will result in you being extra sensitive to conflicts between yourself and someone in close relation. Patience is your ally in this.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): The reason you might feel a bit more lethargic because the full Moon is building up for here tomorrow. The day after tomorrow will be considerably better for you.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): In contact with meetings, clubs and organizations that you are involved with today. You're somewhat more quiet, especially considerate.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): It's hard to choose between the demands of home and family versus the demands of your career in the next few days. Don't worry, hope we have you over. (Not that it gives your point opposition.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is an excellent power day because of Neptune in the air. Building up before tomorrow's full Moon. Meditation, prayer, and other practices will work very for you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Organize your finances properly, because workers, entertainment and anything you can spend time on will be very important to you. Tomorrow will be a very busy day for a few days to make important decisions.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Tomorrow, the only full Moon in your sign for the year. Tomorrow, "personal rights" and tomorrow with partners and close friends is important. Be patient.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Be as considerate as possible with co-workers and subordinates today. People are extremely busy and stressed out today. Be a little more understanding and forgiving. Full Moon tomorrow. (Love thrills!)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This could be an excellent social day for children in your care or for your own children. Vacations, sports, clubs, and parties are highlighted.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Avoid family squabbles today. Several activities or likely because of this full Moon here. Postpone important discussions, especially with partners.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is an excellent social day for your sign. However, it will be difficult to satisfy the demands of co-workers or employers on your part. Therefore, you can accomplish

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every row, every column and every 3×3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

6	2	8	3	4	5	1	7	9
7	5	9	6	1	8	2	4	3
4	3	1	2	7	9	5	6	8
8	4	6	5	3	1	9	2	7
9	1	5	8	2	7	4	3	6
3	7	2	9	6	4	8	1	5
1	6	4	7	9	2	3	5	8
5	8	7	1	5	3	6	9	4
2	9	3	4	8	6	7	8	1

Concepts Sudoku

By Dave Taylor

		7			6			9
	9	5	2					
3	4					7		
	3			5				2
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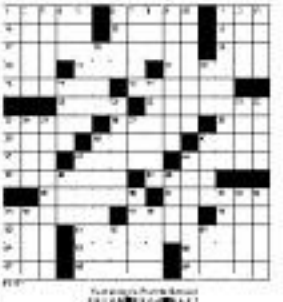
Difficulty level ★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Why Johnny, Ting and Choy do yoga

Pressupp C1

The three men can relate.

"It really is all about breathing," says Velasquez, who has been practicing yoga for six to nine more years. After a back injury sidelined him for two years, he began yoga. He is doing it again, and for the past two years has been working on strengthening his back. "You can apply the breathing you learn in yoga to your daily life. It can help you calm down in times of stress, and you can think better."

"It helps you avoid road rage," quips Velasquez.

The three men know each other well, having worked together in some previous Cojuangco and Feliciano have collaborated to some extraordinary, while Velasquez was executive assistant of Choy's brother, Eduardo, at PLDT. Nowadays, they try to take it easy, despite their busy schedules. they make time for yoga and other competitive pursuits, such as golf and swimming.

Cojuangco says yoga isn't about achieving a picture-perfect pose, but the process of realizing those poses and learning how you achieve them. By analyzing your practice of yoga, you are able to benefit more from it.

"The breathing actually helps you get into the poses," Cojuangco says. "Everything really depends on proper breathing."

It was he with Feliciano who got him into yoga. He decided to tag along to see what it was all about. It's still there. Today, three years later, he is still at it.

"Somehow, you always know that as you get older, you lose your flexibility. Practicing yoga has made my body more supple," he explains.

Feliciano admits he initially thought yoga was boring.

"If you watched people practice yoga, you would find all their movements tedious," he says. "Only when you start doing it that you learn to appreciate it. The first 10-15 minutes is normal because that's when you start breathing. You begin to understand what it does to your mind and body and affects you."

As we watched the men go into their poses, we noticed the emphasis on breathing. As the men started stretching and gradually went through the movements of yoga, they would produce distinctly sounds from one pose to another.

By Cojuangco did a headstand and a bow for the camera, Feliciano and Velasquez would only watch from the sides.

"I can't do a headstand," says Velasquez. "I can't even do a proper lotus. I really have a bad back."

Feliciano says that for many yoga practitioners a headstand is the ultimate pose. "But there are still other more difficult poses, such as a back bend. That I admit I can't do at all," he says with a sigh.

Subramanya Satyanaa Yoga, the form of yoga the men practice, is focused on the flow of movements from one pose to another linked by breathing. Attention is given on the movements from one pose to another and not just the individual poses.

The breathing itself creates heat in the body, which manifests through increased circulation and sweating, thus purifying the body. The movements are also known to improve flexibility, as well as strength in the tendons and bind tissue to allow a practitioner to move to more advanced positions with reduced risk of injury.

Improved circulation in the body affects not just the actual breathing, but also the supply of oxygen throughout the body. It is said that a person can think clearly if there is better flow of oxygen through the brain. Similarly, improved blood circulation also means the cells are replenished and nourished with oxygen and vital nutrients.

Cojuangco says what he likes most about Ashtanga Vinyasa is that the poses are secondary to the breathing.

"It doesn't really matter if your pose is not just perfect. That's not the point," he stresses.

Cojuangco and Velasquez also do Pilates, which they find similar to yoga.

"What Pilates does to build your core," says Velasquez. "But there's also emphasis on breathing, and they both improve your flexibility."

But what Cojuangco finds attractive about yoga is that it is less male intensive. Pilates requires equipment.

"When I was abroad and I wanted to do Pilates, I realized some gyms don't have the equipment you need to do it," he explains. "But with yoga, all you need is your mat."

While most yoga first-timers will most probably leave their first experience in a class, the three men prefer doing it one on one. "Truth is, they're never done yoga together until we met them.

"However, I do find a class relaxing because hearing all that breathing is relaxing," says Velasquez.

Yet, it is not raining in to the sound of breathing in class which should be the focus of a yoga practitioner.

"Actually, you should tune out everything else," Cojuangco chimes. "You should be focused and be in meditation."

All three admitted they more through a number of teachers before finding the right kind of yoga for them. They found Ashtanga Vinyasa to be more apt for their needs.

"We all thought it was the easiest yoga because the movements were simple. Hindi pala. We ended up choosing the hardest kind of yoga," Cojuangco laughs.

"You should try to go to a number of yoga 'studios,'" says Velasquez. "That way, you'll find the kind of yoga that is comfortable to your body. There are so many kinds. Be sure to find the one that would keep your attention, because if you lose interest, staying matters."

They are also not affected by comments that yoga is for women or sissies. For them, it is not an issue.

While they usually practice yoga one on one with their teachers, they are looking forward to working as a class with John Scott, an internationally known Ashtanga Vinyasa teacher who studied with and was certified by Shri K Pattabhi Jois, who standardized and codified Ashtanga Vinyasa yoga.

Scott will be in Manila for his September and will hold a class for 20 students.

However, they are optimistic that yoga in the Philippines would eventually have a bigger following.

"When people ask me about yoga, I tell them what it's all about and share with them my experiences," says Velasquez. "But what's important for people to know is that anyone can do this regardless of their age."

DADY Cojuangco

JOHNNY Velasquez

TING Feliciano

'Siling labuyo' helps revitalize the heart

IT PAYS TO HAVE A WELLNESS buddy. Like much sense! So if you're looking to improve your health profile, associate with people who are blessed with it.

Meet one of my telltale sources of knowledge on natural medicine, Jimmy Jin Llanes, doctor of naturopathic medicine from the college of Manachusetts, Kansas. A former acting director general of the Department of Health, he launched a crusade on teaching healing regimens using basic vegetables and herbs.

A prostate cancer survivor who triumphed in his six-month battle against the disease without chemo, Jimmy used himself as his best case study. Here are nuggets of information from our chat, as director of Philippine College for the Advancement in Medicine, his advocacy continues.

In his opinion only God knows exactly when your time is.

But doctor is a blessed one called the albumin-globulin ratio, a blood marker, which will reveal one's healthy ratio of 2-3 (albumin, 1 globulin). If it is reversed (1 globulin, 2 albumin) or simply 1-1, then it's time to call a priest.

But doctor, who are not afraid of dying have shown tenaciousness in every. What treasure once you're not afraid, your sense of faith and hope goes up, boosting your immune system. This validates what many health experts maintain—the connection between mind and body is to stay that it is now called mind medicine.

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Second heart

While the heart is considered the most powerful organ in the human body, there is a second heart—the liver. If it is the most detoxification organ. Every toxin that invades the system, whether it's heavy metals, preservative coloring, artificial seasoning, parasites, fat/alcohol etc., is filtered by the largest solid organ. Weighing about 4 lb, it is fondly called a chemical plant because it can break down toxic molecules and make them harmless. Also a blood reservoir, it is a storage for fat soluble vitamins like A and D. The bile produced by the liver contains salts that ensure the efficient digestion of fats. While he doesn't subscribe to a 100-percent vegan diet, stressing moderation in the key, Jimmy extols the virtues of a raw diet, vegetables, fish, nuts and eggs. Cooking kills the natural enzymes, the basis for healthy eating.

Raw egg diet

Take two fresh eggs (organic if possible) and swallow whole (never the shell). Do not complicate the non-cholesterol enzyme power of egg white (clears your liver. Eggs when cooked contain cholesterol. Do not mix the egg with milk, vanilla, ice cream, juice, etc. Take it plain, guaranteed to strengthen heart, increase adrenal, hypophysis, energy (key) of the cells, and Co-enzyme Q10, and lower cholesterol.

Anti-diabetes mineral salad

Mix ½ cup each of celtuce, alfalfa, kangkong tallos, carrots and apple jicama (turnip), bitter pumpkin seeds (here raw or slightly blanched. Add sea salt to taste. The vegetable can substitute 72 minerals. Take 2-3 cups daily as anti-diabetes. The raw vegetable your sugar in three days, assuming you lay off refined sugar and carbohydrates.

Homemade disinfectant

Distilled pulverize in raw food to ½ cup each salt and a basin of water for 30 minutes. Or rub raw salt (not table salt) and fresh garlic on food.

Health restorer

1. Sea salt is powerful. A healthy kitchen should always carry this sodium to its natural form. It can revive one's body. Add to daily regimen: ½ tsp rock salt, three times a day with two glasses of water. This will keep one fresh and all day.

2. Potassium, guaranteed raw energy. Have a regular supply of bananas, especially saba. Dito cuba is equivalent to 3 bicombos and 6 laboratories.

3. Fresh chili is an excellent heart restorer. Chop 3 fresh chilis (labuyo is best). Swallow with water after a full meal. Do not chew unless you intend to burn your mouth.

4. Raw eggs. Take two at breakfast on an empty stomach or after a serious meal.

5. Water... Take two glasses every hour.

Stay connected

While life can be stressful, there is a need to maintain balance. Controlled breathing or slow breathing has benefits beyond your biblical expectations—it can put all your organs in a perfect state of harmony for go to your quiet space. Inhale 4 counts, exhale 7 counts. Smile and affirm "I am a glowing ball of energy!"

Love and light!

For free consultations with Jimmy Jin Llanes, call 0917 3300468, 9343697.

Magical experience in Ciudad Verdadero

I HAVE VISITED CIUDAD VERdadero, the sacred and mystical hill at the border of Batangas and Laguna towns in Quezon Province, about a dozen times before. And I have had a number of extraordinary experiences there. But the trip I made there on April 10-13 was nothing short of magical and awesome.

I accompanied four different personality types of women, namely: Karen, a British Reiki healer based in Bangkok; Silpha, a former social researcher of the United Nations based in Pakistan; Julie, a businesswoman and dyt of Living Instruction from Cagayan de Oro City; and Michelle, a medical doctor and spiritual seeker. Of the four women, Mylene was the most skeptical and analytical of them.

Ciudad Verdadero has several mysterious natural spots and objects which sensitive individuals and clairvoyants have discovered. There are, for example, two big boulders a few yards from the spring with medicinal or health-giving water. Upon placing both hands on the side of these boulders while meditating, standing up, many felt strong pulsation, as if the boulders were alive and breathing.

But each person experienced these boulders in different ways. They experienced something like an emotional catharsis. Soon before Julie reached the big stone, she was already crying. And upon touching it, she collapsed and appeared dazed for a minute or less. At the upper boulder, Karen went into trance and started speak-

ing or chanting in a foreign language she couldn't understand.

Washing with spring water

The next stop in our journey to the sacred place was the small spring of water a few yards from the two boulders. Art Camagay, the place's owner, told me the spirits consecrated all those who would come to the spring to wash their whole body with its water.

At first there was a feeling of reluctance to wash ourselves in the spring, until Karen, the British reiki healer, said, "Let's do it all together." And so we did.

We all felt that we were not doing this for the first time, and we had in fact done the same ritual so many times before in previous incarnations in Egypt. It was an awesome experience for all of us and we spontaneously hugged each other in gratitude.

After this, we all felt a strong consecration or unity with one another, although we hardly knew each other in this lifetime. It was then I understood why the spirits wanted visitors to do this ritual. It was a powerful symbol of oneness with nature and with one another. There was total acceptance and surrender to the experience.

What happened to us at the two boulders and spring was only the beginning. There were many mystical events that awaited our unsuspecting group. For example, on the way to the Green Labyrinth, when the sun has already set and darkness enveloped us, Mylene saw something move on the grass we were walking on. All stopped after she shouted, "Did you see that?" She pointed to something which I first thought to be a bat but it was not a bat, it was a strange-looking bird! And it was lying still without any fear of us.

The woman felt a very strong sense of peace and quiet at the Labyrinth, which is really a kind of walking meditation. This Labyrinth is located on the highest portion of the hill and Art Camagay reported seeing the ancient Greek god Zeus there. The night we were there, we did not see any god, spirit or unidentified flying objects like the day looked awesome with so many stars brightly shining down on us. Karen said all her deepest questions in life were answered after walking through the Labyrinth and Michelle received several messages telepathically.

Art Camagay, the Supreme and owner of Ciudad Verdadero, was overjoyed at what happened to the group in that place. "This confirms all that I've experienced and all that I have been told by the spirits. This is indeed the city of truth."

Note: The next Basic ESP & Intuition Development seminar will be held May 1-2, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at Rm. 208 Prime Plaza 1 Unit, Legaspi St., Greenhill, Makati. Call 8187265; mobile 8339886; e-mail jaimelicauco@yahoo.com.

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All's well between Billy Joel and drummer

NEW YORK—Billy Joel's longtime drummer Liberty DeVitto has settled a lawsuit which accused the singer-songwriter of depriving him of royalties from many of Joel's biggest albums...said to have collectively sold more than 100 million units worldwide. DeVitto was Joel's principal drummer from 1971 to 2003 on such albums as "The Stranger," "52nd Street," "Glass Houses" and "Storm Front," as well as in Joel's touring band.

Reuters

MJT MIRIAM says, "I will believe in marriage."

Miriam Quiambao officially single again

MIRIAM QUIAMBAO IS OFFICIALLY single again. Her divorce from her Italian husband Claudio Bandinelli has been granted.

"I've relieved that the legalities are over," she says. "Now I can finally put it all behind."

Does she still believe in marriage? "Of course, I still do," she affirms. "I won't stop trying again because I want to have a partner who will help me raise a family."

What's the most important lesson she learned from her marriage which she will put to good use in her next romance? "One must love oneself fully before loving another. Loving others must come from one overflow." Now Miriam's heart is only overflowing with love for her mother and her son Diego.

I contacted Miss Anne Curtis for her reaction on the nude photos of the ex-wife of his son, Diego, Karen Villanueva, currently circulating on the Internet.

"I haven't seen them," she says. "It's better to keep quiet. Diego doesn't want to comment, too. On the lighter side, Diego has just done a commercial with his family which will be aired here and all over Asia." One proud Mayan is she: one mom ex mom-in-law!

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

Jeans Ramon and Sheryll Soriano were spotted over the weekend in Boracay. Their romance is going strong. Jolas Lloyd Cruz was also seen somewhere in the island. Wonder with whom: Lloyda-was Bernabeu and Bonachinis?

Gaano Ito:

■ A young actress wanted to buy a new pair of boots when she was abroad. But her mother said no because she actress' old pair was still in good condition. All the poor actress could do was window-shop while her Mom shopped till she dropped using her breadwinner daughter's hard-earned money. Shopaholic Mama, workaholic daughter.

■ Organizers of a reality show are appalled with a pseudo-celeb who's pushing himself to be included in the short list of the show's next season. "Kisi siya," laments the head of the production team. "He keeps bragging about his so-called accomplishments. With no naming names,ipapasuri Mo told him kasoli siya dahil hindi sa meet." He's the least one to be on the list!

Catch a refreshing new twist to late-night viewing in GMA 7's "Celebrity Bet" (Saturdays after "Eat Bulaga!") hosted by Alkan K and Regine Domingo. Also in the cast is Pinoyaoke model Fabiolus like and a group of talented young musicians called Six Feet Long.

E-mail: entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

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4 THE LOSERS	FRAME, I LOVE YOU
9 CLASH OF THE TITANS	10 MEN IN BLACK

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1 THE BACK-UP PLAN	1 THE LOSERS
2 THE LOSERS	2 CLASH OF THE TITANS
3 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)	3 WORKING GIRLS
4 THE CRAZIES	4 THE BACK-UP PLAN
5 WORKING GIRLS	5 THE CRAZIES
6 MEN IN BLACK	6 BABE, I LOVE YOU
7 BABE, I LOVE YOU	7 MEN IN BLACK
	8 DATE NIGHT / SHUTTER ISLAND

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	6 CLASH OF THE TITANS

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2 DIARY OF A WIMPY KID	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU
3 WORKING GIRLS	3 WORKING GIRLS
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5 BABE, I LOVE YOU	5 FRIDAY NIGHTS
6 THE ROAD	6 DATE NIGHT

GENSAN

GENSAN
1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 DATE NIGHT
3 WORKING GIRLS
4 THE ROAD

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2 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)	2 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)	2 THE LOSERS
3 SHUTTER ISLAND / MEN IN BLACK	3 THE BACK-UP PLAN	3 BABE, I LOVE YOU
4 BABE, I LOVE YOU	4 BABE, I LOVE YOU	4 THE BACK-UP PLAN
5 THE BACK-UP PLAN	5 FRAME	5 CLASH OF THE TITANS
6 WORKING GIRLS	6 WORKING GIRLS	6 WORKING GIRLS
7 FRAME, I LOVE YOU	7 THE CRAZIES	7 THE CRAZIES
	8 DATE NIGHT	8 DATE NIGHT
	9 MEN IN BLACK	9 MEN IN BLACK
	10 SHUTTER ISLAND	10 SHUTTER ISLAND

CITY MANILA	ELARMINO	CITY SAN LAZARO
1 LOSERS	1 LOSERS	1 BACK UP PLAN
2 BACK UP PLAN	2 CLASH OF THE TITANS	2 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)
3 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)	3 WORKING GIRLS	3 LOSERS
4 WORKING GIRLS	4 BABE, I LOVE YOU	4 WORKING GIRLS
5 BABE, I LOVE YOU	5 THE BACK-UP PLAN	5 BABE, I LOVE YOU
6 CLASH OF THE TITANS	6 LOSERS	6 CLASH OF THE TITANS
7 LOSERS	7 CLASH OF THE TITANS	7 MEN IN BLACK
8 MEN IN BLACK	8 WORKING GIRLS	8 THE BACK-UP PLAN
9 THE BACK-UP PLAN	9 LOSERS	9 LOSERS
10 CLASH OF THE TITANS	10 CLASH OF THE TITANS	10 WORKING GIRLS

CITY STA. MESA	MUNTINLUPA	MARIKINA
1 CLASH OF THE TITANS	1 CLASH OF THE TITANS	1 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)
2 BABE, I LOVE YOU	2 WORKING GIRLS	2 BACK UP PLAN
3 LOSERS	3 THE CRAZIES	3 BABE, I LOVE YOU
4 BABE, I LOVE YOU	4 BABE, I LOVE YOU	4 LOSERS
5 THE BACK-UP PLAN	5 THE BACK-UP PLAN	5 CLASH OF THE TITANS
6 CLASH OF THE TITANS	6 CLASH OF THE TITANS	6 WORKING GIRLS
7 THE CRAZIES	7 LOSERS	7 THE CRAZIES
8 WORKING GIRLS	8 WORKING GIRLS	8 LOSERS
9 LOSERS	9 LOSERS	9 BABE, I LOVE YOU
10 THE CRAZIES	10 THE CRAZIES	10 THE BACK-UP PLAN

VALENZUELA	CITY MARKET	CITY MARIKINA
1 CLASH OF THE TITANS	1 BACK UP PLAN	1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 LOSERS	2 CLASH OF THE TITANS	2 WORKING GIRLS
3 BACK UP PLAN	3 LOSERS	3 BABE, I LOVE YOU
4 CLASH OF THE TITANS	4 WORKING GIRLS	4 LOSERS
5 WORKING GIRLS	5 BABE, I LOVE YOU	5 BACK UP PLAN
6 BABE, I LOVE YOU	6 LOSERS	6 CLASH OF THE TITANS
7 LOSERS	7 CLASH OF THE TITANS	7 WORKING GIRLS
8 CLASH OF THE TITANS	8 WORKING GIRLS	8 THE CRAZIES
9 WORKING GIRLS	9 THE CRAZIES	9 LOSERS
10 THE CRAZIES	10 LOSERS	10 CLASH OF THE TITANS

CITY MANTRIN	CITY MARIKINA	CITY MANTRIN
1 BACK UP PLAN	1 CLASH OF THE TITANS	1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU
3 LOSERS	3 CLASH OF THE TITANS	3 CLASH OF THE TITANS
4 BABE, I LOVE YOU	4 LOSERS	4 LOSERS
5 CLASH OF THE TITANS	5 BACK UP PLAN	5 BACK UP PLAN
6 WORKING GIRLS	6 WORKING GIRLS	6 WORKING GIRLS
7 THE CRAZIES	7 THE CRAZIES	7 THE CRAZIES
8 LOSERS	8 LOSERS	8 LOSERS
9 BABE, I LOVE YOU	9 BABE, I LOVE YOU	9 BABE, I LOVE YOU
10 THE BACK-UP PLAN	10 THE BACK-UP PLAN	10 THE BACK-UP PLAN

luzon

CITY PAMPANGA	CITY LIPA	CITY LUCENA
1 THE BACK UP PLAN	1 THE MAKE OF ELI	1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)	2 DIARY OF WIMPY KID	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU
3 LOSERS	3 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)	3 DIARY OF WIMPY KID
4 WORKING GIRLS	4 WORKING GIRLS	4 WORKING GIRLS

CITY CLARK	CITY BATANGAS	CITY IMUS
1 THE LOSERS	1 THE LOSERS	1 THE BACK UP PLAN
2 THE BACK UP PLAN	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU	2 WORKING GIRLS
3 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)	3 CLASH OF THE TITANS	3 BABE, I LOVE YOU
4 DATE NIGHT	4 WORKING GIRLS	4 LOSERS
5 WORKING GIRLS	5 THE BACK UP PLAN	5 CLASH OF THE TITANS
6 BABE, I LOVE YOU	6 THE CRAZIES	6 THE CRAZIES

CITY BACOLOD	CITY STA. ROSA	CITY MANILAO
1 THE LOSERS	1 WORKING GIRLS	1 BABE, I LOVE YOU
2 CLASH OF THE TITANS	2 THE BACK UP PLAN	2 THE BACK UP PLAN
3 WORKING GIRLS	3 CLASH OF THE TITANS	3 WORKING GIRLS
4 BABE, I LOVE YOU	4 BABE, I LOVE YOU	4 CLASH OF THE TITANS
5 THE BACK UP PLAN	5 LOSERS	5 LOSERS
6 MEN IN BLACK	6 CLASH OF THE TITANS	6 MEN IN BLACK
7 LOSERS	7 WORKING GIRLS	7 THE CRAZIES
8 CLASH OF THE TITANS	8 THE CRAZIES	8 BABE, I LOVE YOU
9 WORKING GIRLS	9 LOSERS	9 THE BACK UP PLAN
10 THE CRAZIES	10 CLASH OF THE TITANS	10 CLASH OF THE TITANS

CITY TARLAC	CITY DAGUPAN	CITY SAN FERNANDO
1 THE LOSERS	1 THE LOSERS	1 THE LOSERS
2 BABE, I LOVE YOU	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU
3 THE BACK UP PLAN	3 CLASH OF THE TITANS	3 THE BACK UP PLAN
4 WORKING GIRLS	4 THE BACK UP PLAN	4 WORKING GIRLS
5 CLASH OF THE TITANS	5 WORKING GIRLS	5 CLASH OF THE TITANS
6 THE CRAZIES	6 THE CRAZIES	6 THE CRAZIES

CITY SAN PABLO	CITY STA. ROSA	CITY NAVOTAS
1 THE LOSERS	1 WORKING GIRLS	1 CLASH OF THE TITANS
2 BABE, I LOVE YOU	2 THE BACK UP PLAN	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU
3 THE BACK UP PLAN	3 CLASH OF THE TITANS	3 THE BACK UP PLAN
4 WORKING GIRLS	4 BABE, I LOVE YOU	4 WORKING GIRLS
5 CLASH OF THE TITANS	5 LOSERS	5 LOSERS
6 THE CRAZIES	6 THE CRAZIES	6 THE CRAZIES

CITY TARLAC	CITY BATANGAS	CITY MANILAO
1 THE LOSERS	1 THE LOSERS	1 BABE, I LOVE YOU
2 BABE, I LOVE YOU	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU	2 THE BACK UP PLAN
3 THE BACK UP PLAN	3 CLASH OF THE TITANS	3 WORKING GIRLS
4 WORKING GIRLS	4 WORKING GIRLS	4 CLASH OF THE TITANS
5 CLASH OF THE TITANS	5 THE BACK UP PLAN	5 LOSERS
6 THE CRAZIES	6 THE CRAZIES	6 MEN IN BLACK
		7 THE CRAZIES
		8 BABE, I LOVE YOU
		9 THE BACK UP PLAN
		10 CLASH OF THE TITANS

CITY LEGAZPI	CITY NAGA	CITY SORSOGON
1 THE LOSERS	1 THE LOSERS	1 THE LOSERS
2 BABE, I LOVE YOU	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU
3 THE BACK UP PLAN	3 CLASH OF THE TITANS	3 THE BACK UP PLAN
4 WORKING GIRLS	4 THE BACK UP PLAN	4 WORKING GIRLS
5 CLASH OF THE TITANS	5 WORKING GIRLS	5 CLASH OF THE TITANS
6 THE CRAZIES	6 THE CRAZIES	6 THE CRAZIES

visayas • mindanao

CITY DRIVE	CITY CEBU	CITY ILOILO
1 THE LOSERS	1 THE LOSERS	1 THE LOSERS
2 BABE, I LOVE YOU	2 THE BACK UP PLAN	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU
3 THE BACK UP PLAN	3 WORKING GIRLS	3 THE BACK UP PLAN
4 WORKING GIRLS	4 BABE, I LOVE YOU	4 WORKING GIRLS
5 THE LOSERS	5 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)	5 CLASH OF THE TITANS
6 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)	6 CLASH OF THE TITANS	6 THE CRAZIES
	7 LOSERS	7 LOSERS
	8 CLASH OF THE TITANS	8 BABE, I LOVE YOU
	9 WORKING GIRLS	9 WORKING GIRLS
	10 THE CRAZIES	10 CLASH OF THE TITANS

CITY DAVAO	CITY BACOLOD	CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 THE LOSERS	1 THE LOSERS	1 THE LOSERS
2 THE BACK UP PLAN	2 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU
3 WORKING GIRLS	3 BABE, I LOVE YOU	3 CLASH OF THE TITANS
4 BABE, I LOVE YOU	4 THE BACK UP PLAN	4 WORKING GIRLS
5 THE LOSERS	5 WORKING GIRLS	5 THE BACK UP PLAN
6 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)	6 THE CRAZIES	6 THE CRAZIES

DAGUPAN DE ORO	CITY BACOLOD	CITY ILOILO
1 THE LOSERS	1 THE LOSERS	1 THE LOSERS
2 BABE, I LOVE YOU	2 CLASH OF THE TITANS (Digital 3D)	2 BABE, I LOVE YOU
3 THE BACK UP PLAN	3 BABE, I LOVE YOU	3 THE BACK UP PLAN
4 WORKING GIRLS	4 THE BACK UP PLAN	4 WORKING GIRLS
5 CLASH OF THE TITANS	5 WORKING GIRLS	5 CLASH OF THE TITANS
6 THE CRAZIES	6 THE CRAZIES	6 THE CRAZIES

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THE TOP-SELLING ALBUMS IN THE Philippines for the week April 12-19 based on Grilyante Music & Video store chain's nationwide sales reports:

Overall

1) "My World 2.0," Justin Bieber, SRM; 2) "Here We Go...," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 3) "BC," BC Generation, Sony Music; 4) "I Star 3! Best Of TV & Movie Themes," Various Artists, Star Records; 5) "Addicted To Acoustic 2," Princess, Vicor Music; 6) "Happy Girls: 2nd Album," Regine Velasquez, Star Records; 7) "The Rare Blunties," Le de Guzz, MCA Music; 8) "Only One," U-Blue, Universal Records; 9) "Restless (Platinum Edition)," Taylor Swift, MCA Music; 10) "Resistance," Journey, MCA Music

OPM

1) "Here We Go...," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 2) "BC," BC Generation, Sony Music; 3) "I Star 3!: Best Of TV & Movie Themes," Various Artists, Star Records; 4) "Addicted To Acoustic 2," Princess, Vicor Music; 5) "Regine Hellos And Alibis," Regine Velasquez, Star Records; 6) "Hello," Noel Cabangon, Universal Records; 7) "Sandstorm of the Soul," Sonic Master, 8) "Summer Revisited: The Love Songs of Ann Margret," Christian Bautista, Universal Records; 9) "Addicted To Acoustic," Princess, Vicor Music; 10) "Forever," Forever, MCA Music

Top 10 US R&B/hip-hop albums

1) "Rearranged 3: Rearranged," Dillie, Lalbeez Jive/RLG; 2) "Still Standing," Monica, J/RMG; 3) "Soldier Of Love," Sade, Epic/Sony Music; 4) "Battle of the Sexes," Ludacris, DTP/Def Jam/IDJMG; 5) "The 2 E.P.I.T.," The Black Eyed Peas, Interscope/Kon; 6) "Raymond v. Raymond," Raymond Murray/UMRG; 7) "How Amerykah: Part Two: Return Of The Ankh," Erykah Badu, Control Freaq/Universal Motown/UMRG; 8) "Here I Am," Marsha Ambrosius, Epic/Sony Music; 9) "Rated R," Rihanna, Def Jam/IDJMG; 10) "I Learned The Hard Way," Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings, Daptone/ AP

odyssey MUSIC & VIDEO

BRET Michaels

Bret Michaels stable after brain attack

LOS ANGELES—Pretty Boy frontman/battered reality star Bret Michaels will have a hard time forgetting things on Friday but was later reported to be conscious and in stable condition at an undisclosed hospital.

A spokesperson for Michaels confirmed reports that the 47-year-old musician was rushed to hospital overnight with an exacerbating headache and was in critical condition.

Doctors diagnosed a massive subarach. noid hemorrhage, or bleeding at the base of his brain stem. The rock singer's spokesperson said there would be no more information given until he has additional tests.

Celebrity website TMZ.com reported late on Friday that Michaels was awake and talking. TMZ said it spoke to the musician who was a dating reality show with Michaels in 2008. Reuters

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

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NOW SHOWING

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Rock 'n' roll in a dance club

By Pocholo Concepcion

WOULD ROCK and roll sound "right" in a swank dance club?

SpectSolis, would the likes of Urbandub, Rambos, or Wolfgang feel at home in Encore—the former Embassy?

A good time

"I just want to give people a nice time, like watching rock bands in a big club with a superb sound system," says Javalito Fernando, vice-president for sales and marketing of JS Music store chains, who's teaming up with several partners to stage "Rock n Rogue"—a monthly series of gigs at Encore in Bo Bon, Taguig.

The event kicks off on April 29 with Urbandub as main act.

Other bands are to play on the succeeding months to close Up Dharma Down, Rambos, The Dawn, Razorback, Wolfgang, and more till December.

Fernando says the idea to bring these groups to an episode, if memory serves me, brought up by the owners themselves. "I celebrated my birthday there in 2006 and I invited bands to play in the party. Everyone had fun," he recalls.

The best sound gear

"Rock n Rogue" is not a business venture in the strict sense, Fernando points out. "We're not out to make money here, in fact we're operating at a loss because I'm spending a lot for a full production," he says. "I'm trying to do something that hasn't been done yet, at least here in Manila."

What he means is that the bands will be given the luxury of performing with the best audio equipment. "Many clubs around town fail to offer a really good musical experience because they lower their rates including the sound system," he observes.

For "Rock n Rogue," Fernando says he has engaged the services of "the top" audio equipment providers in the local entertainment scene.

He has also hired music video directors and musicians RA Rivera to hold the event, which will later air on Channel V.

Different ambience

Best of all, Fernando adds, tickets are reasonably priced inclusive of two beers.

So, to be supporting the typical scruffy rock fan to do-

BAMBOO

sound on the posh Encore?

"We're targeting those who might not have watched the bands in small clubs," says Fernando. "Here is their chance to see them in a bigger venue, with a different ambiance."

But for those who can't imagine shaking their heads to "Underjakpk" on a Dance floor, think again because rock and roll has no rules.

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